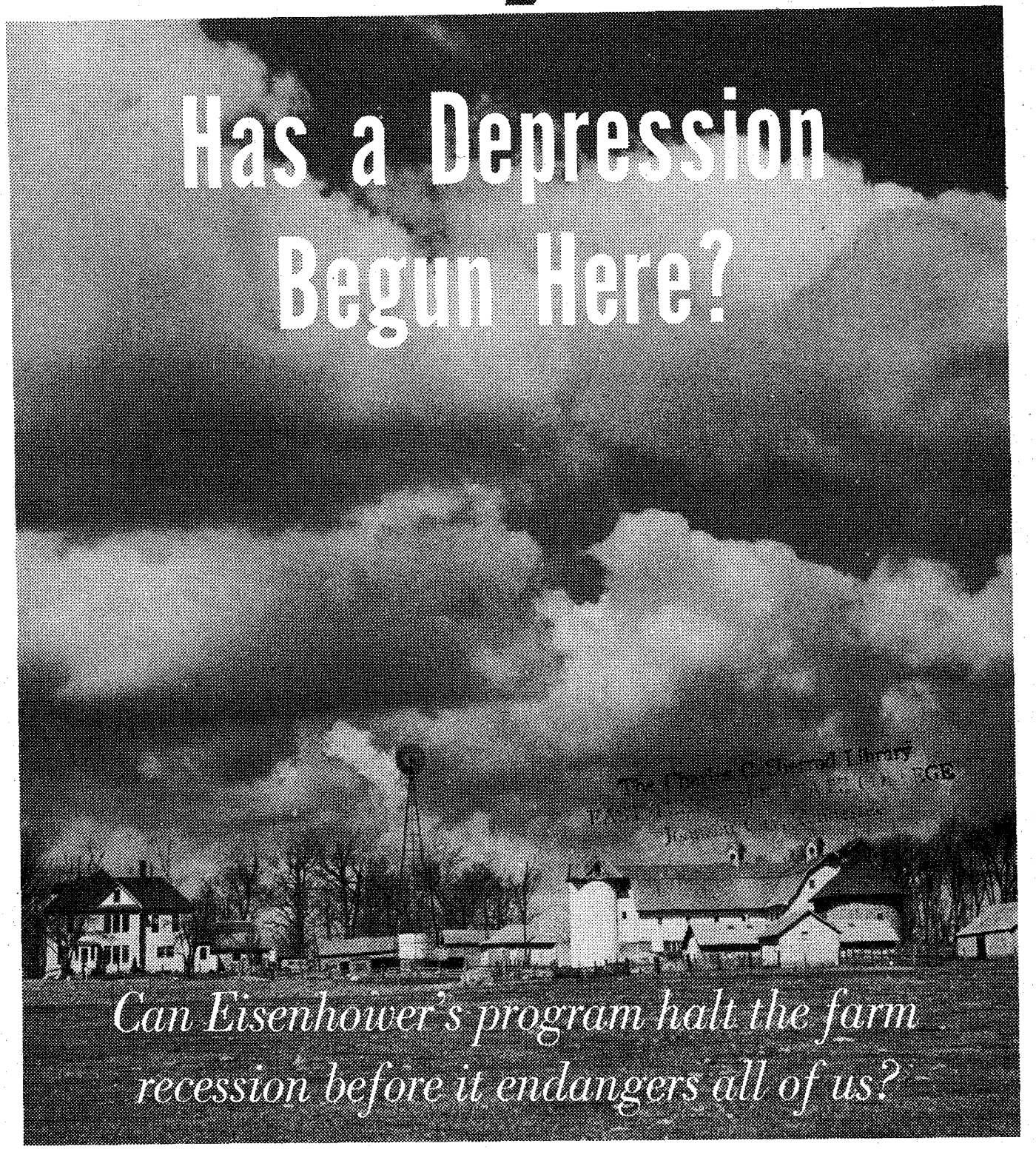
20c • JANUARY 25, 1954

A Review: Dos Passos' Jefferson

# New Republic



## Has a Depression Begun Here?

*Can Eisenhower's program halt the farm recession before it endangers all of us?*

JAN 26 1954

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# T. R. B. *Washington Wire*

**Ike is now fighting** the GOP all across the Congressional front—Bricker on the Bricker Amendment, Saltonstall on the seaway, Rep. Daniel Reed (R, N.Y.) on taxes, Ives on the labor bill, practically the whole Republican kit and caboodle on freer trade. It would have been better to raise these issues last year, but it's too late to cry about that now. Democrats aren't offering a responsible counter-program but are following hit-and-run tactics on individual issues. In general—as chaotic a bipartisan free-for-all as we've seen in years.

We keep thinking of farm Secretary Ezra Benson, holding his press conference in support of Ike's new agriculture program. He is an optimistic, sincere, earnest man of Christian goodwill. Reporters sat around a big O-shaped table in a windowless, air-conditioned conference room. Sweet and smiling, Benson brought in his wife and three girls (smallest holding doll) to watch the session, giving it all a home-like, chintzy touch. He wore a double-breasted brown suit, and kept assuming Congress would be reasonable. "I believe farmers are going to understand that the present program is just impossible," he said. "If we keep buying crop surpluses, it will make the potato fiasco look like child's play." He added that it costs a million dollars a day, just to store the surpluses now held by the government. Looking at Benson's kindly, eupeptic face with the children behind him, we reflected that this was the first time he had offered a specific, detailed program to Congress. He had never had any experience in trying to get things passed. In this he typified the whole Eisenhower Administration. It is all starting a year late. In his hopefulness Benson seemed to have little understanding that a Cabinet member is just a sitting duck. We left him expressing what seemed to us insane optimism over forthcoming Congressional co-operation.

**One of the most** depressing things in American public life is the betrayal by the professions. We don't mean the businessmen—the go-getting NAM and US CofC, Heaven knows, are simple and direct money grabbers who understandably follow the line that leads to profits. But why should the organized voice of the legal profession, the American Bar Association, betray the nation in supporting the Bricker Amendment? Practically every law school dean opposes the amendment; John W. Davis and a group of distinguished lawyers denounce it—why then should the well-educated ABA lead the fight to hand foreign policy back to the 48 states?

**Then take medicine.** Anyone with compassion in America today knows that catastrophic illness strikes poor men and ruins families, yet instead of trying to work out some solution in the name of Christian conscience the AMA does little but chant "socialized medicine—socialized medicine" like a bullfrog down a drain. Asked by Rep. Charles Wolverton (R, N.J.) what affirmative solution the AMA offered, a spokesman told a UP reporter, "It's not our business." Even the American Legion, we are glad to say, is now blasting the AMA for greed and preoccupation with "whether the doctor makes or loses a dollar."

"Why doesn't the public buy private health insurance?" says the AMA pettishly. Aside from the fact that it is laughable to think of the Negro sharecropper or city slum dweller taking this complicated precaution, the fact is that a lot of health insurance policies are phony. The big Machinists' union has been exposing them. Most policies have fine-print clauses, the union discovers, giving the company power to cancel "at any time." Workers who sent in claims generally got payment the first time but thereafter (a) found their policies cancelled; (b) were told this particular illness was now excluded; or (c) were asked to pay much higher premiums. In no case was the fine-print cancellable clause explained by salesmen in the first instance.

The Administration's humorously ignoble efforts to appease McCarthy collapsed. Vice-President Nixon, you remember, came back from talks in Florida to tell reporters off-the-record that a formula has been worked out. Why, Joe might even support the Administration's farm program! McCarthy at once gleefully attributed Benson's proposal to taper off farm benefits to sinister New Deal Communists still hidden in the Agriculture Department; he favored "100 percent parity" himself. Republican colleagues meanwhile promoted McCarthy to the Senate Rules Committee. A Gallup Poll shows 50 percent of the public now favorable to McCarthy, 29 percent unfavorable and 21 percent with no opinion (college graduates are slightly unfavorable; but Republicans support McCarthy 3 to 1). Meanwhile McCarthy's stooge Robert E. Lee comes up for confirmation on the FCC—another Eisenhower effort to appease the Senator, this one by patronage. It was Lee's presence on the FCC on an interim basis which helped persuade the major networks to give McCarthy $300,000 free time to "answer" Truman (which he used to attack Ike).

**Notes:** Sen. Alexander Wiley (R, Wis.) was the Spartacus who held the bridge till Ike belatedly discovered the harm of the Bricker Amendment; now Ike is thoroughly aroused and says he will make a direct appeal to the people. . . . If Ike read newspapers he would learn about these things earlier. . . . Over a million illegal Mexican wetbacks are now entering the US a year, keeping wages depressed throughout the South; big ranchers favor the influx. . . . Soviet proposal to buy US butter and other surpluses may be propaganda, but it is deft; Midwest super-patriots cherish holier-than-thou attitude toward Reds, but even more would like to sell surpluses. . . . Quaint development is how Ike has swung to Taft view on foreign policy; Ike entered politics largely to block the Taft plan to reduce the army, cut back troops abroad, economize on defenses, place emphasis on air and navy; more and more Ike now follows the very same program he originally fought. . . . Rep. George Bender (R, O.) is the latest to refer to "2,000 Communists and fellow-travelers" which the Administration has allegedly dropped when actually most of the "security-risk" discharges have nothing to do with disloyalty; a breakdown of cases would destroy the hoax, and the White House won't give it.

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Noteworthy This Week

# BEHIND THE HEADLINES

## The Continuing Ambiguity

"THE BASIC decision [taken by the President and the National Security Council] was to depend primarily upon a great capacity to retaliate, instantly, by means and at places of our own choosing." With these words, spoken during the preparations for the proposed Big Four Conference at Berlin, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles revealed that (a) the Administration is essentially confused on matters of military and foreign policy and (b) that an international agreement regulating nuclear weapons is now more remote than ever.

Dulles' speech on January 12 came soon after the State of the Union Message in which President Eisenhower based his foreign-policy proposals upon the claim that "the initiative is becoming ours." In trying to support that dubious statement, Dulles got into the position of pretending that a return to the Truman policy of atomic "deterrent" strategy represents a great step forward in statemanship, and that the successful conclusion—the Korean Truce—of new policies adopted by Truman when the "deterrent" strategy brought us close to disaster in 1950 represents a uniquely Republican triumph.

Perhaps the new policies with which we met the Korean crisis have been successful enough to justify returning to a "retaliatory" strategy that invites the Communists to attack us again in a manner to which atomic retaliation demonstrably offers no effective reply—unless the transformation of local aggression into worldwide atomic war is considered effective reply. And perhaps there are reasonable arguments for taking the risks involved in that strategy. But no such arguments were presented by Dulles. Nor did he admit to the risks. He depended rather upon the words "of our own choosing" to imply that we are in control, that we indeed have the initiative. But we can no more "choose" where and how to retaliate against local aggression than we could in 1950. We had the bombs then. The choice was either to use them against Russia, and later China, or to fight in Korea where they were useless. And will that not be the choice again?

Nor is a return to the "retaliation" strategy consistent with Dulles' talk of withdrawing overseas forces to create a "strategic reserve" in the US. Scheduled budget cuts will force demobilization of the troops withdrawn. This would be consistent with a policy that begins with the assumption that local defense is no longer needed. But to begin with that assumption, schedule budget cuts accordingly, then continue to speak of a "strategic reserve"—placed in the US where it would be least available in an emergency—is sheer doubletalk. The Administration should decide either to state its policy frankly and defend it as a gamble forced by the immense cost of sustaining the post-1950 type of rearmament, or it should change the policy.

With respect to the Big Four Conference it seems pertinent to ask why, after having agreed to discuss the Russian demands for a "ban on atomic weapons together with the establishment of international control over this ban," and "an unconditional pledge not to use these weapons," Dulles chose to announce before the discussions that the key to our whole future military policy will be those very weapons.

There was never any chance that we would agree to arms regulation which would leave Russia's principal weapon—its army—intact. But unless there is a possibility of striking a bargain, discussion is futile. And remote as the possibility may be, it is difficult to see what is gained by transforming into empty ritual that part of the conference which will explore it.

### Announcement

**Effective January 29, the publishing and business office of the *NEW REPUBLIC*, heretofore located in New York City, will be consolidated with the magazine's editorial offices at 1826 Jefferson Place, NW., Washington 6, D. C.**

## Take No Chances

LAST MONTH an Illinois mother complained that her daughter had obtained an "obscene" novel—*The Boy Who Came Back*, by C. H. Knickerbocker—from the State Library. Secretary of State Charles F. Carpentier, immediately issued a directive to remove the novel and all "similar" books of an "obscene" nature from library shelves.

Acting in accord with the temper of the times, the assistant state librarian carefully consulted the Merriam-Webster International Dictionary to determine the exact meaning of the words in the directive, then banned some 8,000 volumes comprising at least 500 titles. Included were books on sex education.

Robert Downs, Director of the University of Illinois Libraries and Past President of the American Library Association, protested vigorously. Others joined him. Finally Governor Stratton carefully said something about "going slow" on purging books. Now State Secretary Carpentier, shaking his head about "overzealous librarians," has ordered the books put back on the shelves, promising "to tighten up supervision" to make sure children did not get books intended for adults.

## About Time

FOR THREE YEARS a California group has been trying to drive ABC newscommentator Chet Huntley off the air. And they cost him at least one sponsor before he decided to hit back. Huntley finally filed suit against the leader of the group—a Mrs. Sue Suchman. Mrs. Suchman has agreed to pay damages, and, more important, she has written a public apology.

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"I am sorry," she writes, "I have no evidence which would indicate that Mr. Huntley is other than a patriotic, loyal American. . . ."

This lack of evidence did not impress Mrs. Suchman or her followers before she was brought to court. Now that they have been given a lesson in the fundamentals of Americanism, lack of evidence may cause them to stop their running attacks on Drew Pearson and Mrs. Roosevelt as well.

## Old Story—New Cast

THE EXPECTED China Lobby assault upon Dean Acheson's successor has begun. And it has, of course, begun obliquely. The first move was entrusted to Sen. Herman Welker (R, Idaho) who rose on the Senate floor to smear a former law partner of Secretary Dulles—Arthur H. Dean, special US Ambassador to Korea.

Welker accused Dean of expressing views which have "long been held by pro-Red China apologists in the State Department," of "chanting the siren song of collaboration with the rulers of Red China," and of generally spreading Communist doctrine.

Dean, Welker "revealed," had been a member of the Institute of Pacific Relations "and was a major financial contributor to the organization. . . ."

Dean, in his reply, placed responsibility for this attack squarely upon Alfred Kohlberg, a New York importer who heads the China Lobby. While he was at Panmunjom trying to arrange the Korean Peace Conference, Dean said, "Kohlberg sent me a pair of rubber gloves to cover my bloodstained hands."

He went on to say that his attackers were giving "great aid to the Communists," and had "definitely" affected his efforts in the Korean negotiations.

The technique of attack differs not one whit from that used against the Democrats, and the attackers are the same, as is their goal—control over US Far Eastern policy. Their success will depend largely upon whether Secretary Dulles, with the full support of President Eisenhower, chooses to temporize or to hit back swiftly and firmly.

## Keep 'Em Out

IN AN ACTION similar to that which set off the Chief Joseph Dam controversy last year, two bids by foreign firms for an electrical equipment contract have been rejected in favor of a higher bid by Westinghouse Corporation.

Westinghouse, which received the lion's share of the Chief Joseph contracts, bid $771,346 on equipment for the Big Eddy substation in Wasco County, Oregon and again walked off with the contract although the English Electric Export and Trading Company bid $634,890 and American Elin, an Austrian firm, bid $558,600.

The Austrian firm was by far the lowest bidder even after application of "Buy American" provisions which disqualify foreign bids which are less than 25 percent lower than the lowest domestic bid.

Interior Department officials ascribe this decision to "complicated factors."

## Tito Chooses Lenin

THE IDEOLOGICAL clash within the Yugoslav Communist movement, although spiced with some remarks of more personal than political character such as those pertaining to the relative virginity of the "inner-circle" ladies, has marked significance for socialists inside and outside Yugoslavia.

Milovan Djilas, one of Tito's main theoreticians, raised a question which the Communists considered up to now as having been definitely solved at the beginning of the century when Lenin defined the role of the party. For the Bolsheviks, a party member was a militant, a professional revolutionary working under strict party discipline. The idea that professional revolutionaries of the type Lenin envisaged became almost inevitably professional bureaucrats of the Stalinist type is not new.

Indeed, the "democratization" or debureaucratization of the party Djilas proposed is not far removed from the Menshevik concept of a socialist grouping. If Djilas' view had prevailed, the main and maybe the only bond between Yugoslav Communists would have been the Marxist theories of dialectical materialism and not the Leninist rules of monolithic party action. But Djilas has been reprimanded, stripped of his posts in the Communist League and warned that even his membership in the party is in danger.

The speed with which Djilas was cut down will serve as a warning to others whose ideas may, in Tito's words, have been "unduly influenced by the West."

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*Washington Wire* by T. R. B. ..... 2
*Behind the Headlines* ..... 3
*The Giants Crouch* ..... 6
by Frank Gorrell
*Eisenhower's Farm Plan* ..... 7
an editorial
*Who Has Been Hurt Thus Far?* ..... 9
by Tom Fitzsimmons
*What Remedies Will Congress Choose?* 11
by Robert Engler
*What Is Being Done to the Land?* .... 14
by Kenneth S. Davis
John Dos Passos, *Thomas Jefferson* .... 16
reviewed by Irving Howe
N. Kazantzakis, *Greek Passion* ..... 17
reviewed by Kimon Friar
Fiction by Gordimer, West and Dahl 18
reviewed by J. H. Raleigh
Clay Blair, *Atomic Submarine* ..... 18
reviewed by Roland Sawyer
Dylan Thomas, *Doctor and the Devils* 19
reviewed by J. M. Brinnin
W. S. Woytinsky, *World Population* 20
reviewed by Robert Lekachman
*Mademoiselle Colombe* ..... 20
reviewed by Eric Bentley

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## The "Long Nose" of Government

SOME BENCH MARKS are available by which to measure Mr. Eisenhower's proposals for Taft-Hartley revision. One is the "19 points" on which former Labor Secretary Martin Durkin thought he had received the President's pledge of support. Another is the 1949 revisions proposed by the late Sen. Robert Taft, who had pride of authorship in his law but grace enough to recognize that he was out of step with the country. A third is Mr. Eisenhower's own campaign speeches, including his speech to the 1952 AFL convention.

Judged by any of these standards, the President's Taft-Hartley message is mean-spirited, contradictory, and rooted in ignorance of the facts of collective bargaining. This cannot be ascribed to malice in the President, because by all observable signs he is above personal maliciousness. But it may appropriately be ascribed to the bias and ignorance of his powerful subordinate, Sinclair Weeks, Secretary of Commerce. James P. Mitchell, Durkin's successor as Secretary of Labor, ought to be ashamed of himself that he could do no better in getting sensible Taft-Hartley reforms offered as the "Administration program." An able citizen, Mitchell should have gone back to Bloomingdale's department store, where he made sense as management's industrial-relations counselor, before he allowed himself to serve as a stooge for Weeks.

**The President's** proposals include a little "sugar" for unions—about three and a half grains. Anti-union injunctions in secondary boycott cases would no longer be mandatory, just discretionary. Unions would be held accountable for the acts of members only under the common-law doctrine of agency—which happens to be the rule the National Labor Relations Board is substantially applying under Taft-Hartley. Red tape in filing union reports would be reduced—and multi-millionaire employers, as well as union officers, would be compelled to file non-Communist affidavits if they wished to employ the services of the NLRB.

The contrast in what the President's message suggests to harass unions is shocking. Mr. Eisenhower said in 1952 that the "heavy hand" and "long nose" of the government should be removed from the collective-bargaining table. Now he seriously proposes that the "heavy hand" and "long nose" should be intruded in every bargaining situation involving interstate commerce by a secret NLRB ballot after—or maybe before—a strike is called.

The President has repeatedly claimed that he didn't want industrial disputes "in the White House." Now he proposes that the simple Presidential fact-finding boards, required by Taft-Hartley in alleged national emergencies, be transformed into boards that recommend terms of settlement of a dispute. To whom would these boards report except the White House, and how would their recommendations be implemented except by White House pressure?

Mr. Eisenhower told the AFL convention that he understood some Taft-Hartley provisions could be used for "union-busting" and he wanted none of that. The basic T-H union-busting clause is one which allows "economic strikers" to be fired, another group of employees to be hired, and either the employer or the "new employees" to demand a new representation election from which the strikers are barred. In the event of real depression and mass joblessness this might be a deadly union-breaking weapon.

Former Secretary Durkin understood this, and one of his "19 points" would have restored the Wagner Act practice of allowing both strikers and "new employees" to vote in a new NLRB election. Senator Taft understood it, and *his* 1949 amendments would have restored the Wagner Act provision. Mr. Eisenhower's proposal doesn't allow the strikers to vote. The union-busting clause is left intact.

Durkin's "19 points" included one that flatly repealed the Taft-Hartley provision allowing anti-union state legislatures to override federal protection of union security. Mr. Eisenhower's message eliminates this repealer and encourages enactment of amendments to allow the states to hamper unions more broadly. The Supreme Court has upset a Wisconsin law dictating compulsory arbitration in disputes affecting "public health and safety" and a Pennsylvania law expanding on Taft-Hartley in prohibiting certain picketing practices. The President wants the law changed so that these decisions will be reversed.

Both George Meany of the American Federation of Labor and Walter Reuther of the Congress of Industrial Organizations announced instant opposition to Mr. Eisenhower's program. Arthur Goldberg, CIO counsel, summed up the situation by saying that former Secretary Durkin's 19 points were "somewhat to the left of Taft's center while the Eisenhower program was somewhat to the right of Taft's center." He added, flatly, that enactment of the President's program in toto would be worse than Taft-Hartley.

**There are** two fundamental misconceptions in Mr. Eisenhower's message. One is the doctrinaire notion that union members wouldn't strike if it weren't for the "labor bosses," and that government-conducted strike votes are therefore desirable to "protect" workers. The second is that the federal government should yield its predominance in writing basic laws on collective bargaining and surrender to the 48 states.

There is abundant testimony, as to the first mistake, that the rank and file is more "militant" than the leaders. The wartime Smith-Connally law required NLRB secret ballots before a strike would be "legal," and the workers voted so overwhelmingly for strikes that in 1945 Congress refused any more appropriations for conducting the ridiculous ballots. (Total, 1.6 million for strikes, 332,000 against.) Again, under the Taft-Hartley law the theory that workers did not want the union shop was tested—and the rank and file voted more than 90 percent in favor of the union shop.

Mr. Eisenhower's second serious blunder—his urgency to weaken federal protections of labor and to turn unions over to the mercies of lobby-infested state legislatures—arises from his apparently endemic notion that the state governments are "good" and the federal government which he heads is an evil incubus. There are plenty of jobs for the states to do—but when is Mr. Eisenhower going to learn something about states' wrongs? When will he learn that strong unions, protected in their basic rights, are essential to our free system?

The President was sold a bill of goods by Weeks. Mitchell, his Secretary of Labor, failed to protect him. If Mr. Eisenhower is educable, if his orderly Army soul allows him eventually to learn something about the importance of forceful unions in an industrialized capitalistic democracy, he may eventually look back upon his first Taft-Hartley message and bitterly ashamed of its meanness and inadequacy.

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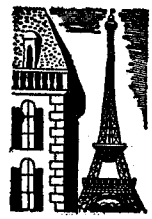
# *Paris Dispatch:* THE GIANTS CROUCH

**The dominant fact** in Western European affairs at the beginning of 1954 is the effect—already felt and sure to grow steadily stronger—of the two New Looks—the Russian as well as the American. Both are accepted as present realities. Though greatly, even dramatically different in details, the two reorientations are considered similar or parallel at least to the extent that the Russians and the Americans—each people in its own way and for its own reasons—are looking homeward, shifting the center of gravity of primary concern to domestic affairs while at the same time seeking to build a new—and new kind of—strength on the periphery of their country's world power.

The expectation in Western Europe is therefore that there will be world peace, or at least the absence of world war during 1954. But the new varieties of military isolationism that have appeared both in Washington and in Moscow are accompanied by new—as yet unclear—kinds of interventionism. The US notion of the military roll-back has been replaced by the system of the atomic strike-back from key-points on a Radford Line which has been extended (or is being so extended) to make a huge containing ring around Russia. Soviet fifth-columnism is also in process of being revamped, as is shown by internal changes in the pattern of local Communism in foreign countries as far apart as France and China.

Judging by present Western European trends, the relative stabilization of the status quo at major points of contact between the Soviet and the free world, will be accompanied by greater fluidity within the two camps, and even more within separate nations. It seems likely that the year will be a period of gradual lessening of the power both of Washington and of Moscow to exert direct political influence on these internal changes, either by attraction or by repulsion.



The changes in Russia are taken far more seriously by Western European public opinion than they seem to be in the US. The liquidation of Beria had more effect upon them than did the death of Stalin; and it was interpreted not as a confirmation of the survival of a hard core of Stalinism but as a further break with the traditional amalgam of political mysticism and secret police supremacy. Instead of finding—as the *New York Times* does—the Russian New Look no more than skin deep, the *London Observer* says that:

> The policy of piecemeal concessions has deepened into a steadier movement. A thousand and one events and statements, in themselves unspectacular, add up to show that doctrinaire ideology is being sacrificed to efficiency and initiative. It begins to look like one of those profound and irresistible movements of opinion which from time to time in Russian history have caused successive tyrannies to change their grip.

**The *Monde*** of Paris, analyzing the composition of the military tribunal which condemned Beria, says that the Red Army has finally succeeded in beheading the political police. And practically all Western European commentators agree that the appointment as Deputy Prime Ministers of five industrial technicians (including Tevosyan, the Russian Krupp, and Pervukhin and Saburov, who have studied the most modern US industrial methods not from books but from practical contacts in US factories) means the rise of a new class of technocrats, with ideas not very different from those of US big businessmen. Edward Crankshaw, one of Britain's best informed Russian experts, says:

> In the realm of high policy a serious effort is being made to carry through the managerial revolution which started some years ago and did not get very far. Doctrine is being subordinated to practice; men of action are taking over from theoreticians; technocrats are stealing the limelight from the professional party leaders. These men who may be expected to be more interested in building up a strong and prosperous Soviet Union than in the theory of world revolution.

Probably there is some cause and effect between the US and Russian New Looks. In any event Western Europeans take the US reappraisal as a matter of here and now; and at least as seriously as do the new Russian masters, soldiers and technocrats alike.

For example, the *Figaro* of Paris says that "deflation and concentration" are the order of the day not only in US global strategy but also in foreign policy, domestic policy, the budget, and generally all along the line.

The same newspaper—strongly pro-American—suggests that if the centrifugal forces of the free world in Europe, meaning in particular Franco-German enmity, are not overcome, the US will "devaluate" France for the benefit of Germany. This possible evolution of the US New Look has taken on a new and disquieting significance for many Western Europeans since the decision of Washington to build up Pakistan's military position.

Pakistan, it is believed, is slated to become in 1954 the Asian fulcrum of US global policy as Germany became the European fulcrum in 1953. One reason is obvious. The Radford Line is being extended from its European terminus in Turkey to Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan (and if Vice-President Nixon has his way, to the strategic crescent including Formosa, South Korea and Japan). Another reason is equally obvious: the Pakistanis have the making of good, tough soldiers (as we can confirm on the basis of personal observation in their country).

**But there is** a third reason: Pakistan flanks India, the hearth of Asian neutralism and the biggest power in southeast Asia. This is the potentially weak area of Asia, the region from which a threat to the rear of the Radford Line can come. Is it possible that the armed Pakistan is supposed to face two ways, indeed less toward Russia than toward India and southeast Asia? In case . . . and since France and northern Italy, with their millions of Communist votes and their opposition to the EDC, constitute the comparably weak area of Europe, can the military, political and moral inflation of West Germany (which made Konrad Adenauer *Time's* man of 1953) be the only real threat to the balance between the two New Looks on which world peace depends?

*Paris* FRANK GORRELL

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A JOURNAL OF OPINION New Republic

# *Editorial:* Eisenhower's Farm Plan

IN PROPOSING a plan for American agriculture, President Eisenhower properly points out that our greatest present problem is the existence of "huge and growing surpluses." He takes note of the fact that the problem is "not one of general overproduction" but "rather one of unbalanced farm production." The answer, he rightly points out, is to "open new market outlets both at home and abroad, not only for current supplies but for future production," and so to "provide for the stability and growth of farm income."

But between these sound, stated objectives and the specific operating program he asks Congress to approve lies a world of difference. The new plan Eisenhower would have Congress institute would actually cause a heavy cut in farm income and would rely primarily on the encouragement of scarcity production to "balance" supply and demand.

Eisenhower's plan, produced by Secretary Benson and his advisory committee after a year of study, adheres closely to the flexible price-support system enacted by the Republican 80th Congress in 1948. That law is due to go into effect at the end of this year unless Congress takes some other action. The sliding scale of price supports it provides ranges from 75 percent to 90 percent of parity (the price level calculated to give the farmer a fair return in relation to his expenses).

The meaning of parity would be changed under Eisenhower's proposal to a "modernized" formula, based on prices in the last 10 years instead of in the period of 1910-14 used in the old parity formula. The "modernized" formula would amount to a roll-back of parity to a lower figure. To lessen the pain, the President proposes that the decline be limited to 5 percent a year, but the final reduction will bring new parity prices of wheat to $2.07 per bushel from the old parity figure of $2.45, corn to $1.59 per bushel from $1.78, cotton to 32 cents per pound from the old 34 cents.

The combination of the new "sliding-scale" system of supports and "modernized" parity will mean a further drastic drop in the level of farm income on top of the 11-percent decline in farm prices in 1952 and the additional 10-percent decline in 1953.

President Eisenhower argues, however, that instead of weakening the economy by lowering farm income, the "sliding scale" has the greater merit of serving as a check against depression because it will serve to adjust farm production to consumption. The theory is that falling prices will lead farmers to cut production of surplus crops and so balance supplies with demand. But the facts are that at the beginning of the Great Depression, between 1929 and 1932, farm prices fell 56 percent but farm production rose 4 percent.

"The sliding-scale theory of supports has never worked," the Farmers Union states. "From 1919 to 1922 prices received by farmers dropped by 40 percent while production went up 5 percent. And the same thing happened during the farm-price drop from 1952 to 1953." Actually, when farm prices decline, history shows, the immediate result is that farmers tend to produce more, not less, to maintain their income under the lower prices. Eventually the lower support levels would bring about reduced production, but in the process thousands of families would be forced out of farming, our national capacity to produce food would be greatly lessened and forced unemployment would grow in industry as farm buying dwindled.

A case could be made for lowering government support of farm prices strictly as an economy measure to cut government expenses. Eisenhower chose instead to offer the specious argument that lowering prices to the farmer is a way to balance the economy.

The existence of the vast stores of government-owned farm commodities which have accumulated as a result of the bumper crops and loss of foreign markets of the past year are the first obstacle to achievement of Eisenhower's goal of "full parity in the market" for the farmer. His program contains a device for eliminating that problem temporarily. The *Wall Street Journal* calls it a "legislative sleight of hand." "Mr. Eisenhower wants Congress to pass a legislative wand over a $2.5 billion hoard of . . . farm stuffs now owned by Uncle Sam. Presto, this 'surplus' would vanish."

What the President actually recommends is that part of the $2.5 billion worth of commodities now owned by the government be made into a "strategic reserve," similar to our stockpiles of various vital defense materials. Those supplies would not be considered in computing support prices, acreage allotments or marketing quotas for future crops. (If they were considered under the "sliding-scale" system, support prices would be cut from 5 to 20 percent.) The commodities that went into the government stockpile would be permanently removed from the commercial markets, and these "frozen" reserves "used in constructive ways" for "school lunch programs, disaster relief, aid to the people

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of other countries" as well as stockpiles. The practical effect of this setting aside of the present surpluses would be to maintain the present price-support levels for the time being, probably until 1956.

The methods, other than stockpiling, suggested for disposing of surpluses are already being used. Commodity Credit Corporation stocks of farm products have been considered as reserves for the purposes Eisenhower mentioned for many years. Much more thought and imagination will have to be devoted to finding efficient new uses for farm products if surpluses are not to pile up higher in the future. "Farmers' interests will be particularly served by strengthening of the work of the Department of Agriculture in developing market outlets both at home and abroad. In my Budget Message I shall recommend that sufficient funds be appropriated for this purpose," Eisenhower told Congress. But last year the President asked Congress to cut the Truman budget request for research in agriculture by several million dollars and specifically requested a reduction in funds for the Foreign Agricultural Service which is responsible for expanding our markets abroad. The President, in his message, did speak specifically of the need for expansion of farm markets abroad. He asked for authority to continue using our "food and fiber surpluses in foreign economic assistance." But of the $250 million in farm goods FOA was authorized to send overseas last year only $44 million has been disposed of.

Eisenhower announces that special "trade missions" will be sent to Europe, Asia and South America "to explore the immediate possibilities of expanding international trade in food and fiber." At the same time Secretary Benson and Secretary Dulles will be "organizing discussions with foreign ministers of agriculture on subjects affecting the use of agricultural surpluses in stockpiles." This approach holds great promise. Proposals for disposing of American farm products through international barter agreements are not new. Sen. Wayne Morse has recently urged a plan for bartering food, grain and seeds in exchange for investment opportunities for American business in countries which lack adequate food and the funds to purchase it. Sen. Paul Douglas is currently exploring the possibility of exchange agreements with mineral- and metal-producing countries whereby we would deliver food to them in return for strategic materials with which to enlarge US stockpiles. But no concentrated government effort has previously been applied to seeking international markets through exchange. A determined try might go a long way toward making it possible to distribute food where it is needed.

But implicit in most parts of the President's message on agriculture is an ultimate reliance on scarcity as the certain way to achieve "full parity in the market." The present 90-percent support program is attacked for leading to "excessive production." The weighty job of finding an efficient use for the accumulated surpluses in government warehouses is likely to reinforce the inclination of Secretary Benson and his supporters to hold out as few government incentives to production as possible. Scarcity production now would leave us in 10 years time with a greatly increased need for food and fibers and a run-down farm economy to produce it.

We will need to increase farm production 20 to 25 percent in the next 10 years just to feed our additional population and provide for agriculture its proportionate rate of growth in a full employment economy. To improve substantially the diets of the one-third of our families having an inadequate diet would, of course, require far more. The world's need for the food we can produce goes without saying. It is foolish by price supports to encourage continued production of commodities already in surplus, and to accumulate unneeded reserves for lack of ingenuity in devising efficient uses for them. It would be an even more serious error in national policy deliberately to weaken our productive strength in seeking to strike a financial balance.

THE POLITICAL strength of the farm bloc in Congress which has a virtual power of veto over Eisenhower's farm program held the same power under Roosevelt and Truman, with the consequence that there has been no objective reappraisal of government policy toward agriculture in this generation. Neither Democrats nor Republicans have devoted the careful study to the future need for agricultural products prerequisite to any valid plan. Here is a place where a new Presidential advisory commission would be useful. Such an inquiry would begin with a tally of people and acres, would look into what the legitimate need will be under full employment for food for families, fiber for industries. Given these facts a method could be worked out for getting more food to American families by supporting farm prices in such a way as to allow products to seek their natural price level in the market place—a new model of the Brannan Plan. It is urgent that study be given to narrow the price spread between the farmer and the retail store. The implication in Eisenhower's message that urban families will benefit in lower food costs as a result of lower farm prices is not supported by the history of the last year when the farmer received 11 percent less for what he grew and city families paid only a fraction of one percent less for what they bought at the store. Continuous study of ways to get our food to other parts of the world where it is needed will have to go on if trade is to become more than a trickle.

The negative program which President Eisenhower has laid down for agriculture is not likely to be approved by a Republican Congress mindful of the farm revolt against the GOP in 1948 which produced 89 electoral votes in six states for President Truman. Both the President and Democrats who think responsibly of their possible return to power would do the world a service by beginning to study the elementary facts upon which farm policy should be based.

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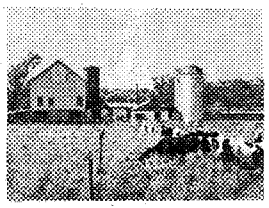

DURING the seven years immediately preceding the great crash of 1929, the lot of the American farmer steadily worsened. He sought relief, but he was ignored. The crash demonstrated that bankruptcy for one group of the people of our country necessarily involves hardship for all.

Today the American farmer again is suffering in the midst of general prosperity. And the question "Has depression again begun on the farm?" can be answered only in terms of four other questions which are examined in the following pages:

How much has the farmer already suffered?

How much and how soon will lower incomes on the farm affect the rest of us?

Will the Republican Congress take a fresh look at the whole farm picture, or will it enact a farm program dictated by political pressure?

Has the President's reorganization of our agricultural agencies already impaired the farmer's ability to feed a growing population?

# Who Has Been Hurt Thus Far?

**by Tom Fitzsimmons**

FOR THE American farmer, recession has been a condition of life for several months now—during 1953 his income dropped over $1 billion. And as recession was allowed to continue on the farm, it spread to many cities and towns. During November and December, 1953, unemployment jumped 700,000 above the same months of 1952. In some towns close to automobile factories, the overwhelming majority of the population is out of work.

The technological revolution hit the farm late. But when it did hit, its impact fused the farm economy to every other phase of our economic life. The inter-relation is now direct; the cause and effect almost immediate.

Today almost 40 percent of our total working population is in agriculture or related industries; 10 million on farms, 6 million producing for and servicing farmers, and 9 million processing and distributing farm products. These industries are already feeling the effects of shrunken farm incomes; sales of farm machinery, for example, are down 10 percent.

We still, many of us, think of the farm as a relatively self-contained economic unit, one essentially different from a factory with its close ties to suppliers of raw materials, machinery, fuel, power, lubricants, etc. We picture the farmer as growing most of his food, and raising what machinery (horses and mules) and fuel (fodder) he needs. And we assume that economic fluctuations on the farm will affect the pay check of, say, a steel worker, an automobile mechanic, or a construction engineer, only very indirectly and after a long time.

But that picture ceased to be accurate long ago. The picture changed because over the past 40 years our population increased 68 percent and farm production had to rise 69 percent to meet it. Yet the land is no better than it was 40 years ago. Millions of acres are less fertile. Tens of thousands of tons of topsoil have been lost through erosion. Despite gains through the conservation program, the inherent productivity of the soil is still going down. And the number of farmers has decreased.

How then does a farmer, who supplied 8 persons 40 years ago, manage to supply 15 today? And how will he be able to supply the 21 persons he must in 1975?

The answer is mechanized farming. And machinery requires cash. In his annual struggle to make the land yield more and more, the farmer requires more and better fertilizer and equipment, more and more fuel and power. And these things he must pay. The cost of a two-plow tractor today would have financed the production expenses on an average 1910 US farm for 3½ years.

Modern American farmers require each year:

7 million tons of steel—more than is used for a year's output of passenger cars;

50 million tons of chemical materials—500 percent more than in 1935;

16.5 *billion* gallons of crude petroleum—more than is used by any other industry;

350 million pounds of raw rubber—enough to put tires on 6 million automobiles; and

15 *billion* hours of electric power.

When the farmer can no longer afford to buy these quantities, the producing industries and the men they hire know it—quickly. And, since the feeding of our

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1975 population at our present diet level will require a 20-percent further increase in farm production, if he cannot afford to buy increasing quantities, the entire population will have to accept a lower standard of living. The alternative to increased mechanization would be to put another 100 million acres of land into production. They are not available.

During 1953, net farm income dropped $1 billion—seven percent; it is expected to fall still further this year. The farmer now makes $2 billion less than in 1951, and he is caught in a cost-price squeeze besides. Only 45 cents of each food dollar ever reaches him now; in 1945 he got 53 cents.

The 45-55 cents split is an average. For some commodities the spread is wider. The farmer gets 36 cents of each dollar spent on fresh vegetables; in 1945 he got 49 cents. On oranges, he gets 20 cents; in 1946, 46 cents. Onions now 24 cents; 1946, 36 cents. Tomatoes, 35 cents; 1951, 54 cents. Flour, 36 cents; 1947, 50 cents. Evaporated milk, 44 cents; 1946, 64 cents. And where he got 84 cents of each dollar on choice beef in 1946, he now gets 67 cents. What he has lost, the distributor has gained.

During 1953, the farmer managed to cut his expenses 4.5 percent despite higher costs for factory goods and fuel, higher interest rates and higher labor costs. But the prices he receives have fallen 11 percent. The difference spells debt or a lowered standard of living; either means lower consumption by the farmer.

In 1953 the net income for dairy farms in the Northeast was down 25 percent; in Western Wisconsin, 15 percent. Hog-beef fattening farms throughout the Corn Belt are earning 14 percent less. Cotton farms have taken a 10-percent drop.

Wages are up. The price of farm machinery and equipment is 14 percent above 1950. Gasoline is at an all-time high. Fertilizer is more expensive and more must be used.

An owner-operator with half of his land and buildings under mortgage must now pay three to four times as much interest on borrowed capital as in 1937-41; the share-crop tenant must pay six to seven times as much. Falling prices and drought force more borrowing.

The major cause of the farmer's troubles, however, is neither the price-spread nor the difficulty of cutting expenses as costs rise. His income has been cut most by shrinking exports.

American agricultural exports for 1953 fell by more than 30 percent. In 1947 they had reached a level four times above that of 1941. But Western European countries have increased their production of food for five straight years. And the resulting loss of foreign markets for American production has emphasized the contradiction in our efforts to maintain both maximum production and high prices without permanently expanding outlets for that production.

At any given time, production of any given crop may exceed one nation's needs. And, in an age of technological farming, if that nation is a technological giant, overproduction of some crops may be chronic. We have tried to meet this problem with a system of price supports. When over-production forces prices down below a certain level, the excess is stored away at government expense. The reserves built up in this fashion have been of crucial value to us in times of emergency. And for some items—feed grains—our present reserves are not excessive. But for others—bread grains and dairy products—they are both excessive and very costly to maintain. So the consumer who already pays high prices for food must pay still more through taxes. Yet there is a crying need for food in the world. We over-produce and are forced to store only in terms of our national market, but we are allowing the needs of the world to figure less and less in the disposal of our production.

A LASTING PLAN for the use of what we can produce at home can only come from grappling with the problem of finding, opening and developing new markets abroad. The price-support program is unsatisfactory because it attempts to solve a problem of international scope through purely national means.

That problem has plagued some of our best minds because no permanent gain can come from just dumping our production. Dumping would undermine the agricultural base of other nations. The world needs more food and more economic strength, not less.

The alternative to finding new markets is to continue and expand the present price-support program. Under that program quotas on chronically over-produced crops will have to be progressively tightened. Yet if farmers are not allowed to grow wheat, they will grow something else. Sooner or later production of the substitute crop will exceed need. Storage will be necessary and quotas will be imposed. The end result of this spreading cycle can only be lowered national production and high food prices. And in such a situation farmers always join with specialized industries to demand high tariffs. The high price of their products forces them to. As tariffs are raised, production is further cut off from foreign outlets.

Maximum production requires a market able to absorb it. The world, by and large, is hungry. And its hungry millions could become a market for American farmers, and when added to growing consumption at home, assure high production and income.

In one year, those farmers spend about $32 billion. Aside from production expenses, they spend $3.4 billion for food, $2 billion for furniture and household goods, and $1.5 billion for clothing. They account for 14 percent of all retail sales. When they are hurt financially, every major area of our economy is hurt.

If the farmer's economic position had not deteriorated during 1953, our total output of goods and services might have been higher by $13.7 billion, or nearly 4 percent above the actual level.

The farm slump is already a drag on all business activity; it could well become a brake.

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# What Remedies Will Congress Choose?

**by Robert Engler**

CAN THE slick public relations-advertising approach to public affairs be applied to pulling the Republican Party out of the fire of farm discontent in 1954? Congress faces a major clash over the expiring price-support legislation as well as over other farm measures, with each issue dramatizing conflicting commitments and internal power and policy struggles. The pitchmen will have to employ their fullest talents for homespun hokum and the dynamic platitude to postpone or at least divert attention from this dilemma while creating the illusion of unity and a bright new agricultural program which assures non-farmers that the mess in agriculture will be straightened out, farmers that nothing will be changed, and uneasy rural Congressmen that their seats will be safe from the farmer's pitchfork come November.

Farm income has been dropping for the past two years, with parity now at its lowest point since our entry into World War II. Production has been at record heights. Farm costs have remained constant or increased, with the farmer, as he has noted for over a half century, buying at retail in an often monopolistic market and selling in a competitive setting. This has been at the root of his historic interest in co-ops and anti-trust laws. This explains a prime objective of farm economic legislation: the use of government to create control over agricultural production comparable to that which so much of industrial America exercises privately or with far less visible government aid.

Come in, Ezra—how's the weather out there?

The huge commercial farmers are often willing to take their chances in a competitive market that would be narrowed as smaller farmers deprived of government support fail. The processors, packers, and other middlemen who are part of the agricultural industry would welcome lower cost of their raw materials as would many Eastern dairy, poultry and other farmers who buy grains. City families, hard pressed by the rising cost of living, find it easy, if not accurate, to link high food bills with price supports.

City people find it difficult to work up sympathy for the new rural revolt symbolized by the cattleman's caravan last fall. Men who complain of losses in the thousands of dollars do not seem impoverished and in need of government aid. Hence the jokes about the stockmen stopping enroute to Washington to water their Cadillacs. Then too there are memories of other cattleman marches on Washington only a few years ago—to kill price controls.

But the many farmers, for whom an industrialized agriculture means heavier investment in land and machinery than they can afford, along with high fixed operating costs, see no course but to insist upon continuation of the present price-support program on non-perishable commodities, and in some instances, extension of comparable programs to perishables. And they are uneasy about Mr. Benson's characterization of price supports as emergency or disaster legislation, his reluctance to commit himself to this program's continuation after 1954 and his apparent preference for a return to the "competitive model" through increased research, expansion of markets and sliding-scale supports. (The latter system tends to lower supports when production is high and raise them when higher production is desired, which critics feel would hurt the farmer hardest when he needs help the most.) And so in increasing numbers they perhaps reluctantly conclude that parity guaranteed by Congress at 90 percent today is safer than parity promised by Eisenhower at 100 percent in the market place for the future. (The parity formula seeks to guarantee farmers the same ratio between the prices of goods they buy and sell that existed in an earlier and more favorable period.)

The resulting unrest on the farm, as Rep. Lester Johnson's surprise Wisconsin victory indicated, may provide a wonderful opportunity for the Democratic Party to capture the House of Representatives and perhaps even the Senate in 1954. The "out" party generally does well in mid-term battles. Some 40 Republican House seats, many substantially rural, were won by a five percent or smaller margin in 1952. And it was the Midwest farm belt which gave Mr. Truman his dramatic 1948 victory. The farm crisis accentuates the economic split between Eastern and Midwestern Republican farm interests. (George Aiken of Vermont, Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, favors flexible supports while Clifford Hope of Kansas, Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, leans to the current support program.) But it tends to solidify within Democratic ranks Southern conservatives like Senator Russell, interested in cotton, and liberals like Senator Humphrey, worried over wheat. Even the serious Democratic

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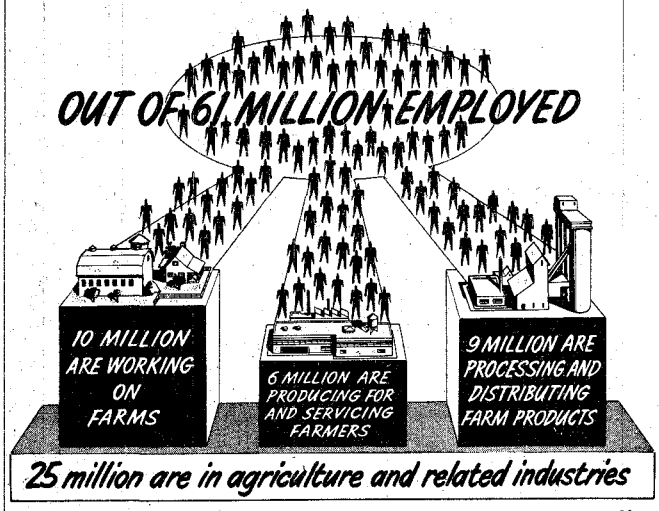
OUT OF 61 MILLION EMPLOYED
10 MILLION ARE WORKING ON FARMS
6 MILLION ARE PRODUCING FOR AND SERVICING FARMERS
9 MILLION ARE PROCESSING AND DISTRIBUTING FARM PRODUCTS
25 million are in agriculture and related industries
12

cleavage of several years ago over the Brannan plan, which has been criticized by men like Senator Anderson (a former Secretary of Agriculture) as economically unsound, seems secondary now that Korea is over and the nation is once more confronted with what appears to be overproduction. Mr. Brannan's plan, relating to perishables, called for farmers to sell produce for what it brings on the open market, with the government setting a support level which it would back up where there was a difference between the market and support levels, through direct production payments to farmers. Some of Mr. Benson's tentative proposals bear a startling resemblance at several points to this scheme which ex-President Hoover had described to the 1952 Republican National Convention as "sure-fire Fascism mixed with give-away programs."

Thus the traditional party of property seems cast in the role of threatening the survival of the nation's historic and most sanctified economic institution—the hard-earned, oft-mortgaged and gradually disappearing family-type farm. Conscious of his political power, the "individualistic" farmer is reluctant to rely on the free market in a period of falling income and rising surpluses. Herein lies a basic Republican Party dilemma. Big business financed and oriented, its prime sympathies are with the bigger farmers and the allied agricultural industries, although its leaders are careful to pay respect to the mythology of the family farm as "the mainstay of agriculture." But it must have a mass base to maintain formal control of federal government machinery. The Democrats, as Samuel Lubell has noted, planted the seeds of their own destruction by elevating underdogs of American life like the farmer into middle-class status. Now the Republicans are in difficulty with one basic element of their 1952 coalition, a faction which commands political power all out of proportion to its numbers. They won an election after 20 years of defeat, but have yet to demonstrate they have the loyalties of a majority of the American people. What Democratic campaign propaganda had not been able to translate into effective political action has now been successfully evoked—the spectre of another depression, "farm bred and farm led." And Ezra Taft Benson has become the fall guy replacing the tired image of Herbert Hoover.

Many Republican leaders are frightened about the political consequences of Mr. Benson's faith in the economics of *laissez faire*. President Eisenhower may have lofty (and undemocratic) notions of being above politics: "The welfare of our farm families knows no politics and I assure you there shall be none in the approach of this Administration." But these men are professionals who know that ideals are unlikely to be implemented without votes. Most of them have not been as consistently outspoken as Sen. Milton Young of North Dakota. Second-ranking Republican on the Agriculture Committee and from the strongest of Farmers Union states, Young has repeatedly called for Benson's resignation while demanding full parity. There is a good deal of agreement, however, as to the desires of an increasing number of farmers for renewal of the present price-support laws. And so the wheat acreage vote, the Wisconsin election, the cattleman caravan, and other signs of rural distress are far more impressive to Republican Congressmen than the President's plan, urged on him by his banker and processor advisers.

THE CLASH over farm policy is also an internal farm bloc fight. The two big general groups, the American Farm Bureau Federation and the National Grange, with many commodity organizations, are committed with varying degrees of enthusiasm to Republican leadership and such policies as flexible supports. But they are aware of uneasiness toward the Administration among the rank and file. Oklahoma's Farm Bureau president, for example, quit over price supports.

The small and New Dealish National Farmers Union has its sights trained on a program including price supports at 100 percent of parity and comparable assurances for producers of perishables, although it would settle in a Republican era for extension of the existing legislation. During the Truman Administration, critics charged the Brannan plan was a socialist scheme concocted by the Farmers Union. The latter, while supporting the plan, claimed it did not go far enough in providing a stable agricultural economy. To hit hard at Department of Agriculture activities or even at the never too friendly Agriculture committees of the House and Senate would have pointed up the embarrassing reality that the Secretary far from controlled his own Department and the Democratic Party its Congress, and that agricultural policy under Democratic rule was rarely Democratic.

Where agricultural policy is to be formulated continues to be a basic issue under the Republicans. Leadership now appears to be coming from the Department of Agriculture, although this is somewhat deceptive. Much of the farm bloc does not want farm policy made in the Executive branch. While it is hard to challenge the sacred and somewhat elusive figure of the President, his Secretary of Agriculture is fair game. The Farm Bureau

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constantly emphasizes local control and many view the reorganization of the Soil Conservation Service with the closing of regional offices as the culmination of a long-time Bureau drive to dominate farm administration through the state extension services and land grant colleges. Although now in a position of power, the Bureau and many processors are rushing to get responsibility shifted away from Washington, as if they expected to maintain control only briefly.

The Senate and House Agriculture Committees assume they should determine policy. Thus far they have not been heard from collectively. With such evidence of discontent as the House Agriculture Subcommittee accumulated on its nationwide tour last fall, they are in a strong position as they face a clash with the Administration. "As long as Congress says 'No' it makes no difference what the President and his 'hired man' propose," writes North Dakota Republican Congressman Burdick in a newsletter to his constituents. Benson "cannot destroy farm price equalization even if he had the desire to do so. Why get so alarmed?"

THE Administration's troubles stem as much from Benson's speeches as his Department's actions. His success in indicating dissatisfaction with the existing price program has been paralleled by a failure to convey to anxious farmers a clear image of what he would substitute. But Mr. Benson is not a devil. Indeed he stands out as an individual in the anonymous managerial crowd now in power. He is raising legitimate questions as to what kind of an agriculture do we want, do we really believe that the family farm is the backbone of agriculture and democracy, and if so, how much are we willing to expend to maintain such a value system. He is right in assuming controlled acreage will not solve surplus problems and that our present fixed support program is a hodgepodge with benefits accruing very unevenly within agriculture. He is right in searching for alternatives when government purchases and loans on crops in storage may reach $6 billion by this spring. He is right in asking if we can expand our declining export markets. And he is not as insensitive to farm fears as his critics would have one believe. ("I have not become Secretary of Agriculture of the United States to sit idly by wringing my hands and let the farmer be squeezed by lowered farm prices and high fixed costs.")

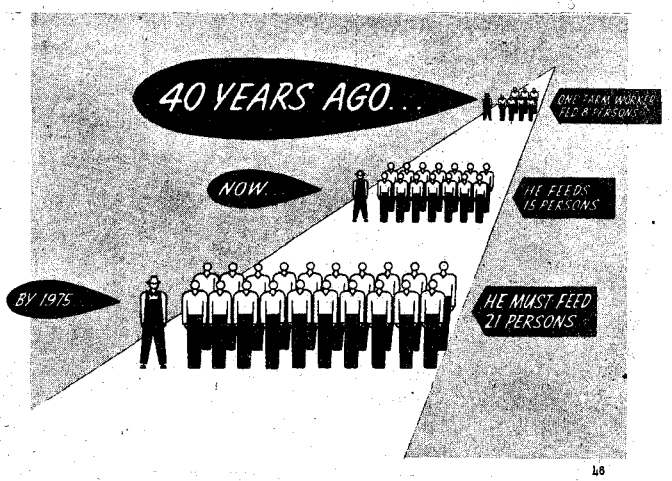
Meanwhile there is criticism in some quarters for Department of Agriculture slowness in setting up drought relief, for not promptly checking falling cattle prices and for inadequate grain storage facilities. But in the absence of a fully spelled out alternative agricultural program, it is the implied premises of some of his statements that are so frightening to many farmers. Firm price supports may well be inflationary, but so appear to be most measures devised thus far for underwriting the economic security of the American people. Sliding scale now may mean the liquidation of many farmers. Is he saying, as have some bankers, that economic recessions serve the useful function of making the economy more "efficient"? If the Administration and its Congressional supporters are considering this, where is an accompanying program of full employment, vocational rehabilitation, and also a national FEPC for displaced marginal Negro farmers in the South?

A sincere believer in state's rights, Benson perhaps has not yet discovered that this is generally the cry of interest groups who fear that government control challenges their private power; that state's rights, when expenditure of funds is involved, is a cause state's righters feel deeply about but practice with discretion; that state's rights means not an unhappiness in feeding at the federal trough but a reluctance to accept interference in table manners.

If Mr. Benson succeeds in making these agriculture issues an interparty fight the American people may benefit, for at last they might find an audience for their views. Many Democrats, dreaming of a farm-labor coalition, will try hard to put this on a party basis, just as the Republicans tried to keep the Brannan plan a political fight. But, it is not likely to work out that way. The Republican Congress cannot afford to allow it. In all likelihood agricultural policy will once more become a bipartisan farm-bloc compromise, with the present support law extended safely beyond the danger zone of November '54 elections.

The present farm stalemate, so characteristic of much of our fundamental political functioning, will continue. But in the narrower party realm the Democrats are likely to be the gainers. The attacks on natural resources, the hostility to TVA, rural electrification and telephone programs and co-operatives, the banker approach to farm credit, the raising of interest rates, and the processor orientation of Eisenhower's Administration are too apparent. Red hunts may divert some attention, but they certainly won't free farmers from these concerns.

Although the farmer is viewed as a conservative, when his homestead and livelihood appear threatened and his faith in the fundamental tenets of a democratic society challenged, he has become angry, articulate, radical, violent and even voted Democratic. Republican politicians may still have time to review their history.

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# What Is Being Done to the Land?

**by Kenneth S. Davis**

THAT THE US Department of Agriculture needed a thorough reorganization, no informed person would deny. In the last quarter-century, Department personnel has been multiplied by four—increasing from 22,000 to more than 82,000. As new functions were assigned the Department by Congress, new agencies were set up to perform them, resulting in an enormous complication of administrative structure. There were overlappings and duplications of activity, even occasional flat conflicts of policy.

By 1949, the Hoover Commission could truthfully assert that the Department had become a "loose confederation of independent bureaus and agencies" with some 20 different offices reporting directly to the Secretary "causing an unnecessary diffusion of authority."

Moreover, the Commission referred to a difficult, emotion-charged question of federal-state relations which has long bedevilled administrators of agricultural programs, particularly at national, regional, and state levels.

It is precisely out of this smouldering issue that further coals of fire were heaped on Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson's already tortured head when he unveiled his departmental reorganization plan in October. When he ordered that plan into effect, the issue became focused on the US Soil Conservation Service.

To understand the opposition to the changes made in the Soil Conservation Service, one must know a little of its historical background. In 1914, when the Smith-Lever Act became law, co-operative extension work became an integral part of Departmental activity, and in 1924 the Extension Service was established as a distinct administrative unit. The work is called "extension" because its purpose is to extend to individual farmers and their families the latest information concerning their technical, economic, and homemaking problems: it is called "co-operative" because the Department, the state land-grant colleges, and the counties share in the expense and administration of it.

But though the federal government and the states are, on paper, sharers of financial and administrative responsibility for this program, in actual practice the role of the federal government has been that of a subsidizing agency. Within very wide limits, state land-grant colleges have been free to make administrative and subject-matter determinations—a fact which seems to argue that federal aid to education *can* be given without federal dictation of local educational programs. The result has been the development of 48 quite distinct Extension Services, varying in kind and quality of program. There are obvious advantages to this arrangement. There is greater freedom for creative work in each state and county than would be possible were the Service highly centralized; there is a more accurate and immediate responsiveness to peculiarly local needs and desires.

But there are also disadvantages, and there is a real sense in which the birth and growth of the Soil Conservation Service has resulted from them.

It is historically true that most State Extension Services failed to appreciate the seriousness of soil erosion, failed therefore to develop adequate control programs, and resisted the needed program when one was devised. The structure and philosophy of the extension program made this inevitable. The work was designed and is still administered in terms of subject-matter specialties, reflecting thus the technical curricula of the land-grant colleges, whereas success with a soil-conservation program cannot be achieved through such fractional means. Absolutely essential to that success is a view of farms, and watersheds, and regions as "organisms" in the Whiteheadian sense, and of "education" and "action," not as separate things, but as aspects of a single living process.

HUGH HAMMOND BENNETT, who fathered the SCS in the early 30's, headed it until his retirement in 1951, and embued it with his own evangelical fervor, was emphatic in his denunciation of a piecemeal approach to erosion control. He condemned a program of education through field demonstrations whereby terraces were displayed on one farm, strip-cropping on another, grassed waterways on a third, and so on. Conservation, he insisted, was not a collection of separate practices but a *way* of farming whereby whatever techniques are needed to do the job on a given farm or group of farms are applied in terms of detailed maps showing soil type, degree of erosion, steepness of slope, and cover.

The SCS, therefore, dealt only with complete farms as it set up 167 projects on a small-watershed basis and established programs in the work areas of some 374 CCC camps. From the first it regarded itself as an action agency (insofar as it conducted an information and education program aimed at the general public, it worked with and through State Extension Services)—and this action concept was strengthened when, in the late '30's and early '40's, all 48 states adopted a standard soil-conservation district law enabling farmers to form legal subdivisions of the state government (generally on a county basis) with authority to enter into co-operative agreements with governmental agencies and individual farmers for conservation work. Today all SCS work with farms is done through 2,510 districts including

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*Kenneth S. Davis, a native of Kansas whose most recent book is* River on the Rampage, *writes frequently on agricultural subjects for the* New Republic *and other national magazines.*

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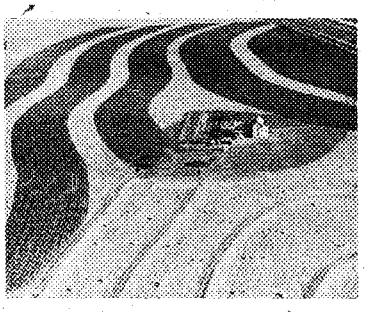
1,385,867,000 acres on 5,027,000 farms and ranches.

It is the National Association of Soil Conservation Districts, headed by an ebullient and hard-hitting Texan named Waters S. Davis Jr., which is currently spearheading the attack on Mr. Benson's reorganization order as applied to the SCS.

Chief target of attack is that portion of the order abolishing seven regional offices of the SCS and reducing the number of "area conservationists" (technical supervisors of district conservationists) from 329 to 236—but also angrily deplored is the elimination from the Washington office of the functions of range management, agronomy, wildlife, forestry, nurseries, and research; the "strengthening" of state offices by creating a State Director to replace the State Conservationist, assigning to him functions of soil survey, engineering, and planning formerly performed by regional offices; and the plan to have SCS field men turn increasingly to state land-grant colleges for technical guidance.



Obviously these changes are designed to reduce the strength of the SCS as a *national* organization, *vis-à-vis* the states, and critics charge that the end-result will be the disintegration of a virile national soil-conservation movement into 48 separate and relatively ineffective programs.

Said an anguished H. H. Bennett at a convention of the Soil Conservation Society of America, held in Colorado Springs early this month:

> We gave the state plan (of administrative organization) a thorough trial (when SCS began) and it failed to meet the needs. . . . We then turned to the regional system, which has worked splendidly. To adopt the other system—the one that failed—would in my opinion cost four times as much or more, without giving us conservation of lasting quality. . . .
>
> The Forest Service has regional offices, the Reclamation Service has them, the Corps of Engineers, and many countrywide industries have them. Why then has it suddenly become necessary that the tested regional system be abandoned? And why pick out for special surgery the Soil Conservation Service, which long has been one of the most efficiently operating agencies in government. . . .

As for Waters Davis, he thinks he has the answers to these questions. He sees in the reorganization the first step in a "plot" to destroy the administrative integrity of the SCS altogether; he is sure that the ultimate purpose of the "plot" is to "consolidate" the SCS with the Extension Service, thus transferring the entire conservation effort from a federal agency operating on a national basis to land-grant colleges operating on a state basis. Since the colleges, in his opinion, are wholly unequipped in terms of personnel or desire to handle the job, the net result will be the destruction of the organization he heads and the end of true soil conservation.

A disinterested observer must confess that Mr. Davis' views seem at least partially justified by a knowledge of the personal backgrounds and views of three of the principal actors in the drama. J. Earl Coke, for example, the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture who has had most to do with reorganization, is a former head of the Extension Service in California, where relations between that Service and SCS have been notoriously bad (as they have been in Texas, Mr. Davis' own state). Some SCS staff-members who dealt with Mr. Coke in California are convinced that he'd like nothing better than to subordinate the SCS wholly to the land-grant colleges.

Milton S. Eisenhower, brother of the President, was nationally known (long before his brother was) as a remarkably able top administrator in the Department of Agriculture where, during the Roosevelt Administration, he served both as a director of information and land-use co-ordinator. He subsequently became president of Kansas State College and is now president of Pennsylvania State College—both of them land-grant institutions. He was certainly consulted when the reorganization plan was being made (his views strongly influenced the Hoover Commission in 1949) and he has been unequivocal in his stated beliefs that the SCS should be "consolidated" with Extension and that, if this were done, soil-conservation districts should be abolished.

As for Mr. Benson, he has made it appallingly clear that he subscribes to the most primitive *laissez-faire* economic philosophy—and it is consistent with this that he should be willing if not eager to weaken (in favor of more "local control," which often means more control by locally powerful fat boys) the federal action programs under his jurisdiction. Early last fall he issued a little blue-covered booklet of a few hundred words entitled *Strengthening American Agriculture Through Research and Education,* in which he seemed to indicate that research and education were about *all* that the Department should engage in.

"Here in a nutshell is evidence of Mr. Benson's limited vision, and isolation from the realities of agriculture," fumed Raymond A. McConnell Jr., editor of the Lincoln (Neb.) *Evening Journal,* in his nationally famous editorial column. "If this presages dismantling or emasculation of the Soil Conservation Service and by-passing of the farmer-elected local conservation districts—as many informed observers are convinced that it does—Secretary Benson is in for a peck of trouble."

Mr. Benson now has that peck, which may soon grow to a bushel. The SCS itself is, of course, utterly demoralized, and has been for months, as staff members are forced to worry far more about saving their jobs than doing them. The spectacle appears tragic to anyone aware of the past high level of SCS morale and efficiency and of the crucial importance of reducing soil erosion in a time when our national population, which must be fed, increases at the rate of five a minute.

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# LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

## THE PERILS OF AMERICANA

**by Irving Howel**

THE MOST IMPORTANT thing to be said about this book is that it directs one's primary attention not to Jefferson but to Dos Passos, not to the example of the only American who might qualify for the role of philosopher-king but to problems of strategy in the writing of modern biography. This is unfortunate, since a truly interesting subject, like Jefferson, never becomes exhausted.

THE HEAD AND HEART OF THOMAS JEFFERSON, by John Dos Passos (Doubleday; $5).

Dos Passos has fallen in with that school of American biographers who seem to consider accumulation a method, the absence of theory a sign of objectivity, and "concreteness" an almost magical virtue. The unfocused piety that goes into the writing of much recent American biography—one thinks of Freeman's *Washington,* as unreadable as it is interminable—is a sign that, deep down, we no longer take the Founding Fathers very seriously. Otherwise, we would try more quickly to come to grips with their central ideas and passions; we would be utterly impatient with the jangling bric-a-brac of Americana.

As a biographer Dos Passos suffers not merely from a weakness for irrelevant specification but also from the need felt by many ex-radicals (see, most glaringly, Robert Cantwell's *Hawthorne*) to immerse themselves in a fatiguing maze of local detail, there to find, amid the glory and the trivia and the bunting, a substitute for a point of view. At first I was alert to the danger that my antipathy to Dos Passos' present politics might prejudice me against his book, but soon it became clear that *The Head and Heart* is not colored but what is far worse, bleached.

Dos Passos begins with some seventy-five pages of canned history, giving the "background" of the American revolution, on the apparent assumption that no one has ever heard of Tories and Whigs before. While preparing Jefferson for his European trip, he provides a McGuffey summary, fabulous in its simplicity, of the French Revolution. Then, after coasting in slow-motion, he suddenly grinds to a stop with the yellow fever epidemic of 1793, which drove Washington's administration out of Philadelphia. Will there be a sequel? Nowhere in the book, or on the jacket have I found an answer. Either Dos Passos has written a hopelessly lopsided biography or his publishers, for no very mysterious reasons, have neglected to inform prospective buyers that the book is not complete in itself.

Not, I hasten to add, that this biography is without chapters of merit. Dos Passos writes eloquently and, I imagine, expertly about Jefferson's passion for architecture, though his refusal to probe very far into Jefferson's thought prevents him from discussing the relation, similar to that in revolutionary France, between republicanism and the effort to adapt the classical temple to modern uses. The chapter which tours Jefferson through Europe, where he pokes into the cultural reservoirs of the continent, converses with liberal *philosophes* and copies a Dutch design for wheelbarrows, is marvellously warm and alive. But these are exceptions in a rambling formless chronicle.

Yet Jefferson is so remarkable a figure that even this unsatisfactory book leads one to think of him, both as a force in his time and an example of our own. Jefferson blended in his person two strains of American experience, the South and the West, the plantation aristocracy and the frontier farmer. The Virginia inlands where he grew up was actually a frontier, the first American West, though immediately contiguous to and influenced by the center of the American South. Much of the original Jeffersonian liberalism rested on this temporary meetings of regions, political tempers and social needs. Had Dos Passos tried to draw an intellectual contrast between Jefferson set against his background and, say, Samuel Adams against his, the result would very likely have been fascinating.

These two strains in Jefferson—I use them as historical symbols even more than regional influence—could not long live together, and toward the end of his life there becomes visible a conflict between them. The Jefferson who hailed *The Federalist Papers* as the greatest political document ever written was to be sadly at war with the Jefferson who believed that the only basis for democracy was a large class of independent small farmers—and this fact may help account for the instability of early American liberalism. The most prescient Jefferson of all, the Jefferson who sensed that the rise of the industrial system might undercut both his old opinions and old uncertainties, would have been sadly dominant at the end had there not also been in him a redeeming and ineradicable optimism, a truly eighteenth century faith in the *idea* of man which, for all that it may now seem deficient in tragic quality, should not be too easily dismissed by us, who make of tragedy a convenience of our moment. Highly complex and uncertain, not at all fearful of calling himself an "ideologist" yet tempering his fondness for abstraction with a common-sense humaneness, Jefferson lived almost to the point where his ideas, *as a system,* became obsolete.

**But if his system** is destroyed by the city and all that the city represents, it does not follow that he is irrelevant to us or merely an ornamental figure for school children and holidays. Few things are more vulgar than an unqualified acceptance or rejection of the ideas of a man who lived 150 years ago. Jefferson has suffered a dreadful fate, quite as dreadful as that of Marx: he has become a victim of his legend and thereby of the cheapest political rhetoric. The more his name is invoked the less attention we pay to him or his ideas. But even if one believes, as I do, that a good part of his political thought will not work for us and that the remainder needs qualification and complication, he is of first importance as an *example.* What matters most in Jefferson is not his ideas but his values.

It is the vision of the intellectual in politics, plunging in and pulling back, keeping a rare and almost miraculous

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balance between his public role and his private needs, that moves one most today.

And then too, the vision of the Jefferson who will compromise with others but not with himself; who drives himself beyond the certainties that were enough for the moment and deep into the dilemmas that were to come only tomorrow; who is described by a French visitor, de Chastellux, in a sentence of gallic warmth: "An American who, without ever having left his own country, is a musician, a designer, a geometrician, an astronomer, a physician, a counselor at law and man of state."

**Even here** the example of Jefferson is hardly decisive, for it was much easier for him to preserve the delicate balance between public and private, leader and intellectual than it is today. Jefferson came before the mass age, the age of the city, and he appealed mainly to a small class of the population which, if not nearly so well educated as he, did at least have some sense of his value or some sense that his value was not bluntly to be sneered at. Patrick Henry's campaign against Jefferson already contains the seeds of that anti-intellectualism which would poison so much of American life, but no more than the seeds; for it must be remembered that the men whom Jefferson would later oppose in political life were of quite remarkable stature, John Adams, whom he loved and respected, and Hamilton, whom he respected.

Nonetheless it is Jefferson who helps suggest a style of life; he points to that rounded concern with every aspect of the mind to which every cultivated person aspires, at least theoretically. Indeed, he is the first major public figure in America, and perhaps the last, who really lives a full life of the mind.

And that is why he is also one of the finest early American writers. Nothing he wrote has the close and powerful logic of *The Federalist Papers*; he does have a tendency to ramble, though often very sweetly; and his writing is sometimes damaged, though sometimes also brought to a fruitful tension, by a conflict between the utilitarian plainness required by the political life and a fondness for Style as the formal ornamentation and capping of thought. His writing has, however, the virtue of integrity: everything about it is true to the man who wrote it; and at times he can rise to the very greatest eloquence.

## REPEAT PERFORMANCE

*Zorba the Greek,* by Nikos Kazantzakis was a peak among novels published in America last year, and his new novel, *The Greek Passion,* sets a standard which few works of fiction can hope to equal in the coming year. In the Greek village of Lycovrissi (Wolf's Fountain) during the Turkish Domination, the Elders led by the village priest, Grigoris,

THE GREEK PASSION, by Nikos Kazantzakis, translated by Jonathan Griffin (Simon and Schuster; $4)

meet to choose the chief characters of the Passion Play to be enacted the following year. On that very evening the Christian integrity of the village and its Elders is violently tested by the sudden intrusion of a band of hungry refugees led by their indomitable priest, Fotis: the ragged remnant of a distant village recently decimated by the Turks. Priest Grigoris, fearing for his own dominance and prosperity, incites the villagers to drive the refugees out and into the stony refuge of a neighboring mountain. The great eternal Christian drama now begins to unfold again.

The protagonists of the Passion Play begin to feel the lineaments of the masks they have assumed eating into their flesh and spirit, imposing upon them unbearable burdens of sacrifice and responsibility. Yannakos, cast as St. Peter, ceases the petty thievery of a peddlar; Michelis, who is to play St. John, repudiates his rich father; Katerina, the village prostitute cast as the Magdalen, conscious of her new dedication, bars her door to the men of the village. Panayotaros, the Judas of the Passion Play, crazed with repressed lust for Katerina, savage under the compulsive doom of the Betrayer, seeks in every way to steep himself in evil, to rush into betrayal and thus free himself from an irrevocable destiny. Manolios, the shepherd, chosen to impersonate Jesus, carves for himself the mask of the Christ he wishes to imitate: meek, compassionate, kind. The Agha, the Turkish Lord of Lycovrissi, befuddled by drink and drained by his lust, gazes down in contempt upon these internecine Greeks who kill one another by Christian compulsion, and is loathe to intervene so long as his own sensual comforts and the Turkish Domination are not endangered. When his favorite boy is found slaughtered, he threatens to hang everyone in the village unless the culprit confesses, Manolios confesses to the crime in order to save the village, and is saved by the accidental discovery of the true murderer: the Turkish bodyguard of the Agha who had himself lusted for the favorite.

But the center of moral and physical conflict lies in the band of starving refugees led by Fotis. The crisis comes when Michelis, on the death of his father, transfers all his lands and possessions to the refugees. Priest Grigoris declares him insane, excommunicates Manolios as a heretic, troublemaker, and prevails upon the villagers, the Agha, and the bishop to deny the refugees' rights of possession. In desperation, Fotis and Manolios turn from their concept of the meek Christ, and Manolios carves a new mask of Christ the warrior, wrathful and savage. They descend to take forceful possession of their lands, and though they worsen the villagers in the fight which ensues, priest Grigoris enflames the villagers to cry out to the Agha for the death of excommunicated Manolios, the cause of all the upheaval. Manolios, hoping to save the refugees, gives himself up once more to the Agha who, like Pilate during the Roman Domination of Palestine, knowing full well the innocence of this would-be saviour, in contempt and in rage gives him up to the priest and crowd. On Christmas Eve, in the nave of the church, Manolios is killed by his neighbors, the priest, and Judas-Panayotaros, who strikes the mortal blow; Grigoris then anoints the congregation with the blood of the slain man. The Greek Passion Play has been played to its inevitable end. The refugees once more take up their interminable march to the east.

Nikos Kazantzakis writes as if Proust, Joyce, or James had never existed. He has dared to write of themes and in a manner contrary to what serious writers have found to be the introverted temper of modern times. It has been necessary to retell his story in some detail because his implicating narrative *is* his theme. His individual genius has made it possible for him to give his novels sweep without shallowness, majesty without bombast, nobility without affectation, clarity without oversimplification. His racial genius has dared to write a transparent symbolistic allegory in which the parallels wear thin as the novel progresses until the village figures involved in Christ and His Passion merge, disappear, and become one with their eternal prototypes.

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Kazantzakis has succeeded in making his heroes neither types, like those found in most medieval allegories, nor eccentric temperaments like those found in most modern novels. His heroes, like those of ancient Greek drama, are at once unique and typical, individual and symbolic, of flesh and blood yet protoplasm of the transfiguring imagination. Kazantzakis may well be among those few today who point the way to a future integration of total vision, where the split prism of modern times is re-refracted into a white, clarifying sun in which Edwin Muir's vision in his *The Transfiguration* may prevail: "Then he will come, Christ the uncrucified,/Christ the discrucified, his death undone,/His agony unmade, his cross dismantled—/Glad to be so—and the tormented wood /Will cure its hurt and grow into a tree/In a green springing corner of young Eden." KIMON FRIAR

## NOVELS AND STORIES

NADINE GORDIMER'S *The Lying Days* is a *Portrait Of The Artist As A Young Woman* in a South African locale. Not that the author is writing her autobiography or that the heroine of the novel becomes a writer, but the novel contains all the familiar ingredients of the classic autobiographical form: youthful rebellion away from the bourgeoisie and into free love or art or radical politics or all three. There are of course variations on this theme, and neither bohemianism nor "culture" nor political agitation suffice to satisfy the needs and desires of the heroine of *The Lying Days*. At the end, after the break-up of her love affair with a social worker who is trying, hopelessly, to alleviate the problems of the natives, she boards a ship and takes flight, although she is to return some day to help in foraging the uncreated conscience of her race, in some unspecified way.

*The Lying Days* is well, even eloquently, written and has a perspective of intelligence and sensitivity. But it is finally unsatisfying, for in reading it, although you have had a pleasant journey, it is hard to say where you have been. Organizationally, the novel is a *Stephen Hero*—diffuse and amorphous—rather than a *Portrait*—five concentrated acts. Pendant to this structural flaw is a philosophical lack of coherence in a world that seems to have no center and no norms but only abysmal abysses and meaningless conventions. It is one of those social situations that are discussable only if despair is the basic assumption, and is so overwhelmingly tragic that one can scarcely write a tragedy about it. Significantly the only complete and solid character in the novel is a Jew who finally leaves South Africa to go and work in Israel. Of all the characters, sheep and goats, only he has genuine purpose and meaning.

Jessamyn West's *Cress Delahanty* is likewise the story of a nascent girl and is as conventional in its way as *The Lying Days* is in its, only Booth Tarkington rather than Joyce is the archetype. The heroine, carried from thirteen years to sixteen, undergoes all the adolescent experiences — exhibitionism, crushes, withdrawal, dedication, and infatuation for a married man. Now a bright, energetic adolescent, who is not *too* much trouble, is certainly a wondrous thing and this novel conveys some of that charm, with humor and understanding. Still, and without asking the author to write a *War And Peace*, as Jane Austen has so often been asked, posthumously, to do, one must conclude that *Cress Delahanty* is an amused and adult view of adolescence rather than the thing itself, which is anything but a continuous comedy. Some sections of the novel were originally published in the *New Yorker* and the arch side of that publication's tone is very often in evidence, amusing at times but cloying at others.

And, to descend a bit lower once more, Roald Dahl's *Someone Like You*, a collection of short stories, represents the emergent macabre side of the *New Yorker*, where some of the stories were first published. Most of them turn on a fantastic event, often sadistic in nature: a man bets his finger in a wager, another his daughter; a man has a genius' painting tattooed on the skin of his back, he disappears, and the painting turns up at an auction. Mickey Spillane has nothing on this. It's difficult to tell how seriously the author takes these efforts, and many of them conclude on a shamelessly O. Henryesque trick ending, which the reader, once he gets into the swing, can supply in advance. Somehow it all makes South Africa look attractive.

JOHN HENRY RALEIGH

THE LYING DAYS by Nadine Gordimer (Simon and Schuster; $3.95). CRESS DELAHANTY by Jessamyn West (Harcourt, Brace; $3.75). SOMEONE LIKE YOU by Roald Dahl (Knopf; $3.50)

## BUILDING THE NAUTILUS

EIGHT YEARS AGO if anyone had told the newly created United States Atomic Energy Commission that a naval officer, rather than a civilian, would build the first reactor to produce atomic power, the commission would have smiled disdainfully saying that civilians would take care of developing the power in the uranium atom for the benefit of mankind. But while civilians were pursuing cautiously this theoretical policy, then-Captain George Rickover, USN, decided on a specific course of action and went to work. Today he is perhaps the world authority on atomic power.

THE ATOMIC SUBMARINE AND ADMIRAL RICKOVER, by Clay Blair Jr. (Holt; $3.50).

Seven years ago he and a small group decided that the most practicable use of atomic power in the Navy, as a beginning, would be in a submarine. In this proposal Admiral Rickover had the support of a very few renowned nuclear scientists (such as Edward Teller) and fierce opposition all through the lower levels of government. Both Rickover and his submarine were controversial in the Navy Department and the AEC. They still are, though the arguments now are academic. The submarine is built; Rickover has been appointed Rear Admiral.

In this book Clay Blair, Jr, a Washington reporter for *Time-Life*, has written a chronology, as seen from the Rickover perspective. For the most part he tells us what took place, but not always why. It was beyond the scope of this book to discuss why the civilians of the AEC—operating safely behind a curtain of secrecy by which they were safe from much public criticism—failed either to build, or be ready to build, a reactor while a naval captain, with a small but expert staff, could. And to provide the "why" of Admiral Rickover would require the talents of the wisest study of human nature to be found. This is no slur against the admiral; or the contrary, he is as unlike a military man and a wearer of gold braid as could be imagined. He is a philosopher, a production manager without peer, and a heretic. With his heresy goes a loyalty to the United States that is matchless. Rickover lives to improve everything with which he comes into contact, the Navy included.

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The atomic submarine is a symbol of this ideal. Rickover saw in the early days that in submarines we could begin to develop atomic energy for naval use. It could not be used for aircraft carriers, cruisers, or destroyers, because any such ship or series of ships would be overpowered in relation to the fleet. But the submarine, the lone wolf of the sea, could be adapted. Critics bombarded the idea as wasteful and unnecessary. When the admiral won support for his project the critics then said the ship would never be useful for combat purposes. But, as Blair points out, all this is beside the point. While others talked and theorized, Rickover produced. And he did it in the remarkably short time of five years.

Something that men can visualize in atomic power has been achieved. This is a pioneering project, expensive and perhaps leading nowhere directly. But it is the first real step by the United States in putting the atom to use for something besides bombs. The Nautilus cost $55 million. Out of the $10 billion program which the AEC will ultimately control this does not seem an inordinate sum by which to learn something about power. And the US has achieved this because of the leadership and energy of Admiral Rickover.

**Many in the Navy,** the Pentagon, the AEC and private industry don't like the admiral for his ruthless determination and persistent drive, but all the bureaucracies along Constitution Avenue and across the Potomac in the Pentagon could use a few more Rickovers. He produces. He may get in everyone's hair by insistence on getting things done *today*; he may drive his loyal workers at times to proverbial distraction. But he has taken a system, the governmental system, where it is easier and usually more pleasant to procrastinate than produce, and has got results. And he has those qualities of leadership which have enabled him to gather a superb team of nuclear engineers.

All of this has led to more than the first atomic submarine. It has led straight to the construction, in the next three or four years, of the first large-scale reactor to furnish electric power. The admiral and his staff will do that job. If there are those who regret that a military man leads the way in the atomic power field, there is, Blair assures us, this much comfort: Admiral Rickover is an officer with a civilian conscience. ROLAND SAWYER

## THE TALENT OF GENIUS

THE LAST WORK of Dylan Thomas to be published in his lifetime is a product not of his genius but of his talent. The distinction is imperative if the present work is to be fairly assessed and properly placed within the body of his writings. Passages in the scenario, *The Doctor and the Devils*, contain certain of the rhythms and images we remember from his poems, such as this initial description of Dr. Rock:

THE DOCTOR AND THE DEVILS, by Dylan Thomas (New Directions; $2.50).

"Now we see the downhill-approaching figure as a top-hatted man in the wind. From our distance he is still the mystery of a man, alone in a blowing morning on a lonely hill-top; still the shadow, not the recognizably featured substance, of a man.

Closer now, we see that he is a youngish man in severe professional black; and his long cloak is the other darkness around him.

Closer still, we see his body and face as he strides down towards us. He wields his stick like a prophet's staff. We see the deep-set eyes behind the large spectacles; the wide sensual mouth tightened into its own denial; the wild fringes of hair blowing from under the sides of the stiff hat-rim; the coffin-shaped forehead; the insatiable, and even predatory, curiosity of the bent-forward head."

But the work as a whole can best be described in terms of dramatic ingenuity and good workmanship.

The story is a reconstruction of events in the famous case of Burke and Hare (who become Fallon and Broom in Thomas' telling), the "body snatchers," and of Dr. Knox (Dr. Rock), for whom they procured cadavers. The setting is Edinburgh, smoky, crowded and barbarous, in the early nineteenth century. The theme revolves about means and ends in the relationship of social progress to individual responsibility.

A great part of the story, which was written on the basis of a narrative line worked out by Donald Taylor, is given over to the search for new corpses, chosen for delivery to Dr. Rock's morgue while they are living men and women. While this enterprise has its morbid fascinations, none of which are skimped by Dylan Thomas, the story transcends the grotesque through its concern with the character of Dr. Knox as the zealous representative of reason and enlightenment. Visually, the scenario moves in worlds colored by the ego and by the id—between the lecture room of Dr. Rock's hospital shining with the light of science, and the filthy sidestreets, pubs and flophouses of Edinburgh that lie in loud infernal darkness. The two worlds are played against one another dramatically until, finally, they are brought violently together in the fevered conscience of Dr. Rock as he climbs away from the city, up the same hill we had seen him descending as the story began.

It is hard to imagine a more useful script from which a director might work. Thomas' superb visual sense supplies object, detail, nuance, and builds these into moods that cry for picturization. While, structurally, the scenario is conventional, with a sequence of events that might have been set by anyone possessing a basic narrative sense, its quality comes from individual scenes wherein one feels the authentic Thomas touch. Written with an unfailing ability to touch humanity alive and to show it in close-up, many of these are in themselves dramatic gems. Among dozens of characters so minutely focussed, there is not a cliché. This precision in etching emotional reality is what gives the scenario its sure distinction.

As a form of literature, the scenario has teased writers ever since D. W. Griffith made it clear that the motion picture could be a kind of visual literature. In Thomas' hands we have, perhaps, the most useful illustration of its literary potentialities. Much of *The Doctor and the Devils* reads like a series of prose poems, yet nowhere does Thomas make the mistake of trying to have words perform that which is properly within the province of the camera's eye. His words are directives, suggestions, colorations. Economical and felicitous in themselves, they never indulge in tricks of their own, or muddy with an idea perceptions that must communicate visually.

A few years ago, Thomas was commissioned to write a scenario for a projected film version of *Vanity Fair*. He was unable to complete this work and the project was abandoned. The technical brilliance of *The Doctor and the Devils* reminds us, as we are so often reminded now, of the silence death has imposed on a voice that could speak so eloquently in so many forms.

JOHN MALCOLM BRINNIN

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## EVERYTHING MEASURED

THE HEART of the most courageous reader must sink at the sight of this outsized volume whose 1268 pages of two columns each pass relentlessly from geography and climate to natural and human resources, agriculture, transportation, and manufacturing. Nor will he immediately cheer the promise of a second volume as large devoted to world trade and organization. We expect such productions to be worthy especially when their sponsor is the Twentieth Century Fund. We are not surprised when the mountains of statistics yield such monumental mice as the conclusion that the United States is richer and more greatly blessed than other lands, that the rich produce fewer children than the poor, or that life expectancy at birth is higher among American whites than American Negroes.

WORLD POPULATION AND PRODUCTION, by W. S. and E. S. Woytinsky (Twentieth Century Fund; $12).

However, it is little short of miraculous that so factual and so scholarly a work should be continuously interesting. The reason may be that the Woytinskys have taken enormous trouble to make their materials clear and their presentation varied. Thus, this encyclopedia of world information is studded not only with tables and diagrams of conventional kinds, but also with many graphs drawn on ingenious principles, pie diagrams, illustrations, and even cartoons—indeed almost every pictorial device save the four color picture. Curious and important facts abound on almost any page. Any reasonable question about income and output, people and their homes, the present or the outlook for the future will probably be answered.

What objections can the most churlish raise? Two, at least, I fear. The first is theoretical. A work centered upon human needs and the resources available to meet them must come to grips with Malthusian doctrines. The real question is: are men produced more easily than the food to feed them. Now the Woytinskys are, of course, aware of this question in formulations much more sophisticated than this one and in their introduction they flatly deny Malthus' conclusions. In the body of the book, however, they skim only the edges of this controversy and in the opinion of this moderate Malthusian, fail to destroy the modern Malthusian case.

My second criticism is methodological. The Woytinskys are skilled manipulators and, on occasion, originators of statistics. In making the many international comparisons with which their study is filled, they frequently point to the defects of their statistics: lack of comparability, conscious deceit as in Russian figures, and inaccurate enumeration as in African and South American data. All too frequently they then go on to use these same dubious data. Perhaps it all goes to prove that theorists must theorize and statisticians must measure. And it should induce wariness in the consumers of theory and measurement alike.

It is scarcely necessary to add that I admire this book tremendously as a reference source, as a guide to intelligent arguments, and as an excuse for laudable browsing. ROBERT LEKACHMAN

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## GOOD PLAY WELL DONE

**by Eric Bentley**

OPTIMISTIC PLAYS are very depressing. "Too bad reality is different," you say in the lobby. It takes a pessimistic play to cheer you up. When you say "Life isn't as bad as *that*" you are half way to declaring that everything in the garden is lovely. The great tonic of the Broadway season is *Mademoiselle Colombe* by Jean Anouilh, a tale of the futility of boy's meeting girl.

It is a production of many pleasures. Boris Aronson's sets alone are worth the trip to the Longacre. This designer, whose reputation is for thoroughness and grandeur, shows himself, here as in *My Three Angels*, to have as light a touch as anyone in the profession; his joyous wit and controlled fantasy provide a desperately needed alternative to the lush decadence of, say, Oliver Messel or Lemuel Ayres. Aronson's principal exhibit in *Colombe* is a backstage scene in which Anouilh's peculiar blend of French reality with theatrical unreality is accurately translated into color and shape.

The play is also a showcase for some of our finest acting talent—by which I do not merely mean that some of our best actors are in it, nor yet that it enables them to show themselves off. Edna Best had a better chance to show herself off in *Ladies of the Corridor*; the authors gave her nothing else to show. Since Miss Best has one of the most charming selves in our theatre, it is pleasant to have her display it—but it is astonishing to have her dispense with charm altogether and get along quite as well without. Miss Best's part in *Colombe* is that of an aging actress, the boy's mother, wholly shrewish and shrill. Miss Best wears a false nose, chalky make-up, and a red wig; struts, gesticulates wildly, and screams her head off; in fact, goes all out; all of which is remarkable at a time

### Notes on the Critics

IRVING HOWE has recently published a book on William Faulkner. KIMON FRIAR is on the English faculty of the University of Minnesota and JOHN HENRY RALEIGH of the University of California. ROLAND SAWYER is a staff writer for *The Christian Science Monitor*. JOHN MALCOLM BRINNIN is director of the Poetry Center of the YMHA in New York. ROBERT LEKACHMAN teaches at Barnard College.

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when she'd get higher marks for acting if she relaxed and was a bit of a bore. As it was, Miss Best showed the way to the rest of a cast which—except for two performers—Anouilh dresses up as caricatures, outrageous as Hogarth or the Keystone Cops: Sam Jaffe, Harry Bannister, Nehemiah Persoff, and others contribute notable cartoon-portraits. (Mikhail Rasumny is rather unintelligible.)

The exceptions are the boy and the girl through whom a more inward reality is explored. The girl is played by Julie Harris. If my delight over this actress is somewhat belated, I had better admit that I was in Europe when she came to prominence. Astonishing what can happen when one's back is turned! That Miss Harris has the special "offbeat personality" of the newer generation of actresses is the least of it and might well have set me against her. Her personality has the larger strangeness and even (potentially) the grander glamor that go to the making of a Garbo (different as Garbo is). Nor does the final impression come from mere color or timbre of personality. It comes, rather, from Miss Harris' gift, a gift not yet, to be sure, at its fullest development, but nonetheless unspoiled by any of the myriad forces which must have been trying to spoil it. One is afraid for her! She is like one of Anouilh's young women, all sensitive life, while round about is the wicked, insensitive world eager to hurt, not to mention the awful example of Misses X and Y, first ladies of our stage, fifty and forlorn.

Eli Wallach is a favorite actor of mine, but casting him as the hero of *Colombe* was an audacious bit of "off-casting" which has not succeeded. It is very well to ask a straight comedienne like Miss Best to do a character part, but to ask a character actor like Mr. Wallach to play a juvenile lead? The springy élan and homey vivacity that he has to offer he is compelled to save for one scene—the last. Before that we have to observe him grimly holding himself in or yet more grimly simulating qualities he cannot seem to possess like arrogance and intellectuality. The man who played the part in Paris was possibly a less accomplished actor; he didn't do very much with the part; but there was no complaint about him because he fell into place; it is one of those rather neutral roles. Mr. Wallach, though he works manfully, and always holds the attention (because he is an artist), is the Achilles' heel of the show; and the anti-European newspaper fraternity has aimed to kill.

Achilles is not all heel. Apart from one gamble that didn't come off, Harold Clurman, the director, has played an admirable game. Even the over-emphasis on the hero's badness can broaden one's notion of a play which—however you take it—is both witty and moving. I came away from the Paris production thinking Anouilh had but reiterated his standard theme of desecrated innocence, the only difference this time being that the innocent was a man. The Clurman production makes it clear that *Colombe* is—with *Antigone*—one of those more interesting plays of Anouilh in which there is some guilt on both sides of the conflict. The young woman is a very ordinary young woman (to make so ordinary a person so extraordinary on stage being a great joint achievement of Anouilh and Miss Harris), but the young man's superiority is pharasaical. In fact *Colombe* brings to mind a play that those who dislike Anouilh would dislike even more: *Le Misanthrope*.

Like Giraudoux, like Brecht, like Goethe, like Racine, like all foreign playwrights, Anouilh has been called untranslatable. So there sets in that process called Adaptation, which commonly means the conquest and destruction of an author by a jealous would-be rival. If the British version of *Colombe* was not quite that, it was nevertheless full of changes by which the Adaptor vainly sought to justify having his name in the same size type as Anouilh. It is a pleasure to report that the version used in New York—by Louis Kronenberger—is Hyperion to this satyr: more faithful to the original without being less amusing in itself. Following the British precedent, and presumably under instructions from his producers, Mr. Kronenberger did tone down the nausea and pessimism which are most conspicuous in the Edna Best role. In the French she says, "I'm constipated and I've 200 alexandrines to learn by tomorrow." In withholding this from the play, I can only hope Mr. Kronenberger is saving it for his next piece (in *Time*) on Miss X or Miss Y.

There were other small things to grumble about, such as an awkward transition to the last scene in which the PA system is ineffectively and indistinctly used. But by and large, it is a splendid evening, and you leave the theatre full of the hope that M. Anouilh's hopelessness inevitably engenders.


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# From Our Readers

## ► The Economics of Survival

In the *New Republic* of January 18, David Felix says that my article on "The Economics of Survival" in the *New Republic* of November 2 is a "particularly vulgar example" of making "political capital through decrying efforts to reduce armaments expenditures." I would urge that he reread my article. I have never pretended to set my judgment against those more competent with respect to whether our defense outlays should be higher or lower. I have merely decried any attempt to determine these outlays *on grounds other than security needs*, either on the false assumption that these outlays must be reduced to protect the American economy from exhaustion or raised to protect the American economy from mass unemployment. Our economy, with intelligent policies, is strong enough to stand either higher or lower defense outlays determined according to the size of the need for these outlays. Furthermore, this is an important issue even if and when it may be safe to reduce military outlays, because if we realize that these reductions are not dictated by economic necessity, we may use the savings thus effected for economic assistance to hard-pressed free peoples and nations as an important approach toward a more durable world peace.

*Washington, D. C.* LEON KEYSERLING

## ► Kilpatrick on Education

I was greatly interested in Professor Kilpatrick's discussion of "What We Want of Our Teachers" in the December 31 issue of the *New Republic*, for he and his associates have had opportunity to impress their views upon a very great portion of the teaching profession and this impression is, consequently, of great importance.

Whom does he mean by *we*? Professor Kilpatrick and his colleagues? The parents of the children in our schools? The administrators of our educational institutions? It seems to me that it is time for representatives of the teaching profession to call upon non-teachers for co-operation in planning our educational program. Committees of successful teachers (rather than administrators), broad-minded parents, and other citizens interested in the public welfare and education should be organized to consider (a) what the function of the school is or should be; (b) what activities (including studies) will enable the schools to perform these functions; and (c) how these activities should be distributed. Also, these committees might consider the most desirable length of the school day, which includes the question of homework; the length of the school year—which is as it is primarily because children were needed to help on the farms; the length of the school course, for obviously the length of the school day and school year have direct relation to the time necessary for the achievements desired; the teacher's load; and the problem of promotions.

I suppose that out of the work of such committees might perhaps come majority reports but certainly one or several minority reports. Too long, however, it seems to me, the formulation of educational plans and programs have been confined to the teaching profession and to too great an extent to the administrative portion of that profession. What do *we* want? And by *we* let us mean that portion of the people who support the schools who have a vital concern with education.

I raise the question "Is the development of character the primary purpose of the school?" Character, it seems to me, is a by-product. I do not believe, for instance, that honesty can be taught as a thing in itself. The formation of judgments in reading literature are as truly activities as the construction of replicas of mechanical devices. When I taught *The Odyssey*, one of my pupils made a miniature raft to show how Odysseus left Circe's island; but I was more concerned with the pupils' reading *The Odyssey* carefully enough to realize the unconscious satire involved in the Greeks' indignation at the Laestrygons for trying to wreck their ships and kill them and their feeling of virtue for having wantonly plundered the city of the Ciconians, killed the men, and taken their women captive. Probably there would be no character education in such study nor an understanding of Nazi and Russian psychology nor the psychology of some people they know.

There is no denying that many teachers in the past and present have abused memory—and will do so in the future, whether they follow the "old" or the "new" educational theories. This fact emphasizes the importance of the individual teacher as a part of the educational program. It is the teacher who makes the school, whatever the supervisor or administrator may do or say. And there has never been an over-abundance of good teachers.

Good teachers have never thought that memory was a substitute for reasoning and understanding—and I doubt that any activity in itself is a good substitute. Laboratory work is certainly an activity, and just as certainly it may be mere busy work. It may teach the scientific method and its virtues—or it may be mere meaningless verification, the experiments being absolutely controlled and the end result being considered more important than a record of actual performance.

The use of books has advantages over much physical activity. We must not ignore the enormous strides men have made throughout the ages. Through books, by the time a student (not necessarily a pupil) completes a typical high school course, he *may* know more of science than any scientist knew at the end of the eighteenth century, he may know more about the times of the Middle Ages than any one individual living then, he may have a better appreciation of any or several of the arts than the great mass of people had until comparatively recent times.

One of the glories of mankind is that his mind *can* to a large extent *follow the thought* of the world's great thinkers. To do this has as "concomitant learnings" among other things respect for the intellect; realization of the universality of human nature and the influence of environment and circumstance upon it; admiration for perseverance, patient investigation of facts and honesty; and recognition of the fact that human progress is not due to a single "race" or nation. No character development from the proper study of books?

What does Professor Kilpatrick mean by "living"? May not experience be vicarious as well as actual? Does not every child live in a distinctive society? And may not both actual and vicarious experience be misleading? The person who has seen only brown cows will be likely to think that all cows are brown.

As to vocational education, do we not need to recognize that vocational education—even college preparation for professions (including the teaching profession)—is in most cases merely training? Is it wise to direct vocational education in our elementary and high schools toward obtaining jobs? Or should it be exploratory in character, designed *primarily* to give insight into and appreciation of the workaday world? Industry tells the schools, "Educate, and we will have little trouble training your graduates for work in our offices and factories."

The difference, then, it seems to me, between the "old" education and the "new" is primarily, as Professor Kilpatrick says, a difference in *objectives* and *method*. In the former, character development is a by-product of all learning; in the latter, learning is a by-product of character development. The advocates of the "old" education realize that "it is a dangerous thing to play with souls"; the advocates of the "new" education have much less hesitancy. The "old" education at its best recognizes that true reading is an activity (a strenuous one, too) and that other activities are proper if their tend-

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ency is to enlighten the mind, develop useful skills, and give appreciation of the physical and cultural world; the "new" education, judging from Professor Kilpatrick's exegesis of its position, considers books a necessary evil to be used at times but looks upon controlled activities as the essential feature of education, whose primary purpose is to form character and attitudes. The "old" accepts its place as the chief agency for the inculcation of knowledge and the development of skills and appreciation in the arts and sciences; the "new" attempts to supplant and substitute for the home, the church, the theatre (stage, screen, radio and television) and the press in so far as these agencies affect character and attitudes.

I am inclined to believe that in actual practice, the best teachers of the "old" education and the best teachers of the "new" education are not greatly different in their procedures and results. The chief vice of the "old" education is the abuse of memory; the chief vice of the "new" education is the use of activity as busy work. The results of either vice are probably undistinguishable. Some children will learn under any system of education, and teachers can never be sure that the shining examples of their successes are really the results of their efforts. As in the case of endorsements of patent medicines, however, it is possible to analyze the means and from this analysis to discover if there is probability of cause-and-result relationship between the means and the claimed result. The good teacher will be likely to use discriminatingly techniques from both the "old" and the "new" education. Not all things old are vile; newness is itself no recommendation.
*Fort Wayne, Ind.* HERMAN O. MAKEY

### ► The Egoist

I want to add my support to Virginia Woolf's estimate of George Meredith's novels, as "so rich, so knotted, as alive and muscular." There are few novels in my long experience to which I turn in need, and read again and again for their human truth and spiritual clarity. Tolstoi, of course, and Chekhov—these, whatever befalls Russia will outlive her mistakes; and George Meredith in *The Egoist.* Of course Dickens' *David Copperfield* is unique; but for wholesome, sensitive, fresh daring and honest art there is nothing better than *The Egoist.* It sustains society above wars or history, belongs as well to one country as to another, although simply and beautifully English.
*New York, N. Y.* A. A. S. JAMES

### ► The Carp and the Polliwog

The Carp, aquaplaning, a smile on his face,
Was chasing the Polliwogs hither and yon.
His visage wide open, his hungry embrace
Engulfed the poor Pollies he feasted upon.
He smiled as he swam and he sang, "Oh, my golly!
What's good for a Carp is much better for Polly."
The Polliwogs nodded in happy assent.
But never quite knew what their guardian meant.
*New Orleans, La.* JOHN CROMWELL

### ► Suffrage for 18-Year-Olds

I for one see nothing to benefit our country by giving suffrage to 18-year-olds.

The fact that the young men are subject to military call is merely an excuse rather than a reason.

With the franchise will go many responsibilities of citizenship that our 18-year-olds are not equipped to assume.

Congress should think seriously and non-politically before placing this responsibility on the shoulders of our youth.
*Portland, Maine* ALPHONSUS J. MURPHY

## Bandwagon

The three principal urban areas of South Africa have had an unusually quiet Christmas, the police report, instead of the usual outbreaks of violence.

Johannesburg and the Witwatersrand district had only five dead and 250 hurt in shooting and stabbing affrays. In Durban, 10 Africans were killed and there were 118 ambulance calls for wounds and injuries. Capetown reported about 50 victims of various assaults. – *New York Times, December 28, 1953.*

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There will be fewer employed next June —the total take-home-pay will be less— than last June. This, however, may be a good thing for the morale of the nation. – *From column by Roger W. Babson in the Salem (Ore.) Statesman, December 31, 1953.*

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The announcement by President Eisenhower that two US Army divisions (about 35,000 men) will be withdrawn soon from Korea indicates a major shift in policy toward tough, realistic retaliation if the Communists resume aggression on that devastated peninsula. – *Seattle Post Intelligencer, December 30, 1953.*

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But Carnation has also run into some troublesome folklore. For example, in Africa and Asia, natives got the idea that drinking evaporated milk caused impotency. Not until World War II, when Australian and American soldiers conclusively proved this was not true, did the myth die. – *Time, October 26, 1953.*

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Moscow recently has been beaming such American music as Gershwin's "Someone to Watch Over Me" to southeast Asia. – *New York Times, January 9, 1954.*

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. . . He (the junior Senator from Wisconsin) said, however, his Senate Investigations Subcommittee "will continue roughly in the future as it has in the past." – *AP dispatch in Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, January 5, 1954.*

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The conviction of a Mississippi town marshal who pistol-whipped a prisoner symbolizes the tremendous change which has occurred in the public's attitude toward those who abuse law enforcement power. The marshal was indicted under the federal civil rights statute on a charge of beating a prisoner and then refusing him medical aid.

Federal Judge Mize at Jackson sentenced him to 12 months in prison and imposed a $500 fine, both of which were suspended. – *Memphis Commercial Appeal, reprinted on editorial page of Atlanta Constitution, December 21, 1953.*

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